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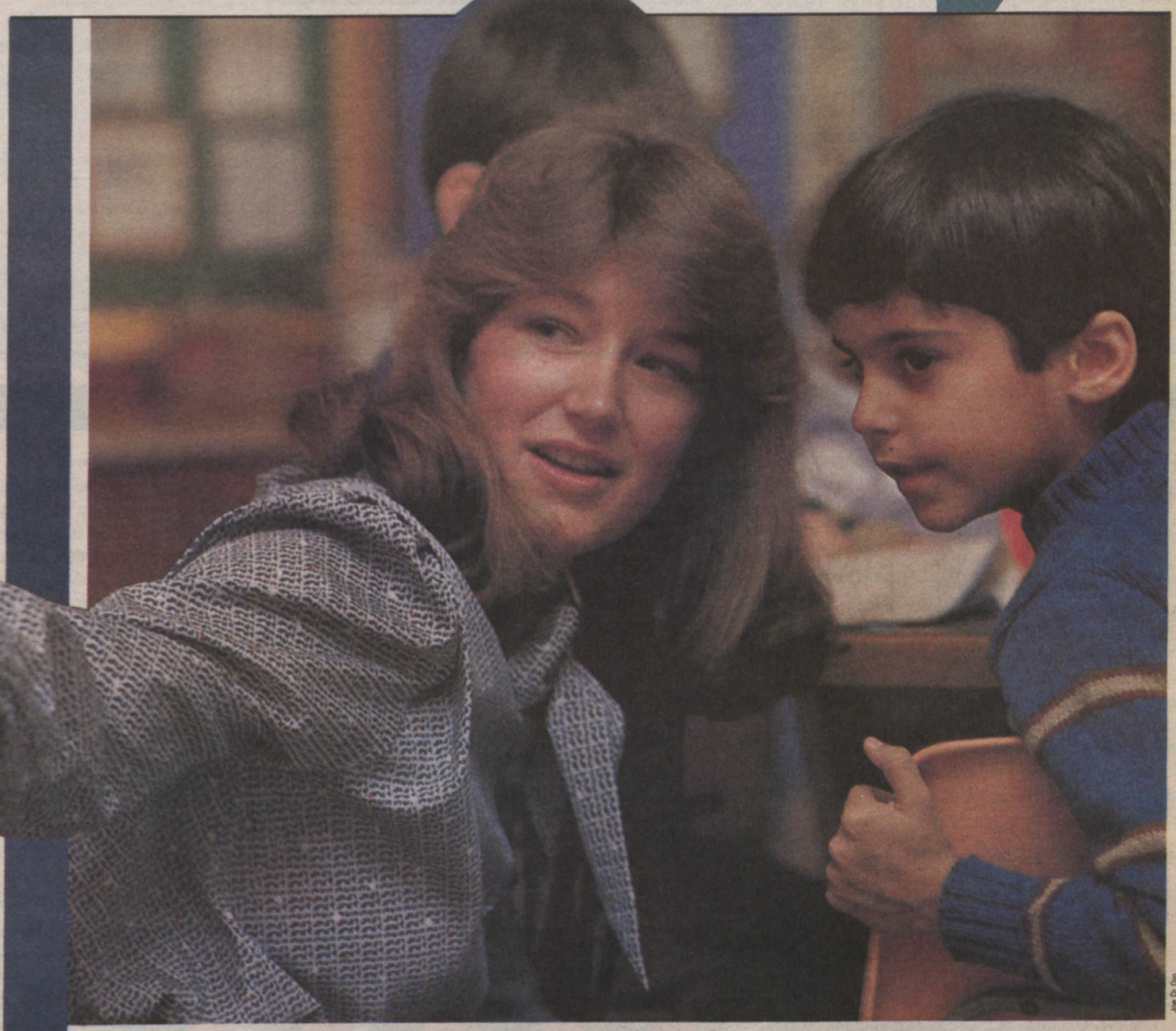

Joe D. Dio

The Best Education Money Can Buy

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PRESIDENT'S VIEWPOINT

January in September

For all of us in education, New Year's Day arrives early. The last days of August, the early days of September—it's then that our new calendars appear, time starts over, the chalkboard gleams (a tabula rasa), fresh faces and fresh challenges await us. It's day one again.

I remember the first day of school, always, as a time of exhilaration. I remember setting aside special time for New Year's resolutions—resolutions rooted in reflections on children and education, on the nature of the responsibilities that were part of the profession I had chosen—the profession I loved.

This introspective habit lingers. And this year I think I know, perhaps better than ever before, what I—what *we*—are part of, what our struggles mean.

We are part of an unfinished revolution—a revolution that promises to erase the gap between what American education is and what it is capable of becoming. Should we allow that revolution to remain unfinished, we will do real violence to the promise that has invigorated this nation for more than two centuries.

I am in no way exaggerating. Columnist and TV commentator George Will, the voice of pensive eloquence among contemporary conservatives, has written that the most appropriate symbol of "America's humble but steady passion for improvement" is "the little red school house, standing for public education."

Will notes the array of cases in which the U.S. Supreme Court has stressed that our public schools play "a foundational role in maintaining the fabric of our society...sustaining our political and cultural heritage...inculcating fundamental values necessary to the maintenance of a democratic system." With these statements, insists Will, the Court has been uncommonly faithful to the intentions of our Founders.

Joe Di Dio

NEA President
Mary Hatwood Futrell

I don't always agree with George Will's opinions. But when he dwells on the message that the vitality of public education is essential if Americans are to remain "an improving people," I'm with him all the way. That's why I'm convinced that for each of us, this school year must be a year of rededication, of recommitment.

Our challenge this year is not merely to sustain the momentum of education reform but to give it added propulsion. We are at a critical juncture. T.S. Eliot wrote that "Between the idea/ and reality/ Between the motion/ and the act/ falls the shadow." This year, that shadow will loom large. To walk through that shadow into a bright new day will demand staying power, perseverance.

We are no longer a nation at risk. We are a nation at work. At work on stubborn problems that resist facile solutions. At work improving schools to ensure that we remain "an improving people."

But there's more work to be done. Ours is a society in transition. The emerging information age demands a new age of education. We must offer students a whole new repertoire of survival strategies, a whole new set of intellectual skills, *a whole new education*.

It's up to us, as educators, to shape that education, to give it life and substance. We welcome this responsibility. But we need help. That's why we must not relent for a moment in our efforts to solicit the active support of parents, other concerned citizens, the business community, and legislators at all levels of government.

Strengthening the foundation of our democracy is a task requiring a crystalization of our national will for excellence. Democracy is not a spectator sport. America's "passion for improvement" withers when citizens stroll the sidelines.

That passion, I insist again, is what this new year—the 1985-86 school year—is all about. We must display that passion ourselves. We must instill that passion in our students. Our heritage—as teachers, as parents, as Americans—demands nothing less.

TRENDS

The 20 Percent Solution

The message that dollars for teachers make sense for the nation appears to have finally sunk in. A majority of Americans—a solid 63 percent—now accept the premise that the road to quality education passes through teacher pocketbooks, according to a new NEA-commissioned Gallup Poll.

In fact, the public believes teachers deserve as much as 20 percent more than they currently earn. The average U.S. teaching veteran now averages roughly $24,500 a year. Americans want to see that figure jump—to $29,000 for experienced high school teachers, to $27,000 for their elementary school peers.

A Down Payment On the Future

The Gallup/NEA poll found Americans willing to put teeth into their salary recommendations—even if that means biting the tax bullet. A majority—52 percent—would accept a tougher tax burden so long as the increased revenues were used to bolster public education and perk up teacher preparation programs.

What other steps would Americans take to improve the quality of public education? One idea, mentioned by 60 percent of the sample, is to institute some form of teacher competency testing.

The Talent Squeeze

If there's one issue that seems to pump up the public's blood pressure, it's the need to attract top talent into teaching.

Well over half those polled in the Gallup survey believe their schools are finding it tough to corral the best and the brightest into the classroom. Most often cited explanation for this difficulty: inadequate teacher salaries.

'We Do Have Standards'

Despite the nation's concern over understaffed schools, those surveyed strongly oppose any efforts to meet emerging teacher shortages by diluting certification standards or softening teacher preparation curriculums.

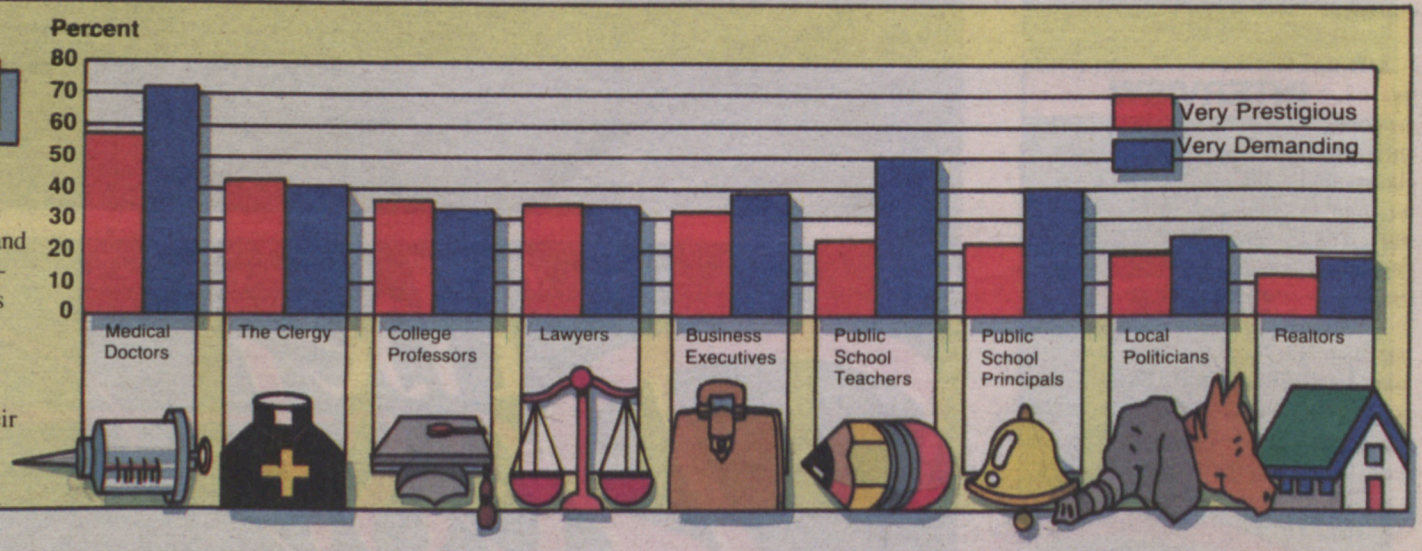
In fact, among Americans who feel their local schools are already experiencing staffing difficulties, only 6 percent would be willing to lower standards to fill the void. And seven out of every 10 reject the hiring of subject area experts who lack formal teacher training.

One in two Americans, the Gallup/NEA poll found, believes in stiffening college admission standards for students planning to enter teaching.

Heavy Workload, Little Respect

The NEA/Gallup poll asked respondents to rate different professions in terms of the workload and prestige associated with each. Half of those surveyed believe public school teachers' workloads are very demanding (teachers rank second only to medical doctors on this measure).

But only 23 percent see the teaching profession as having a lot of prestige and status in their community, and 30 percent feel teachers have little or no status.



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THE DROPOUT CRISIS

The number of students—now more than one in four nationwide—who leave high school before getting their diplomas signals a crisis of devastating proportions.

What causes so many of the nation's teenagers to drop out of school before graduation? The answers are depressingly familiar: illiteracy, poor grades, unexcused absences, undiagnosed health problems, poverty, hunger, drugs, sexual abuse, pregnancy.

Efforts to manage this crisis are at long last appearing in communities throughout the nation. A sense of urgency is surfacing.

TARGETS NATION'S LOST YOUTH

Roughly one in four of today's school-age children won't graduate from high school. Can we reach them? A new NEA effort offers hope.

That urgency will get a big boost in the months ahead as NEA launches a major initiative called "Operation Rescue," designed to tap the creativity of Association members in stemming the dropout tide.

"Each of us knows a student who has already dropped out," NEA President Mary Hatwood Futrell reminded delegates to this summer's NEA Representative Assembly as she proposed the new project. "Each of us knows a youngster at risk. There have been many efforts to help the so-called untouchables. But America must do more. *We* must do more."

When President Futrell asked the Assembly for permission to set aside one dollar from the dues of each of NEA's 1.7 million members for Operation Rescue, the 7,500 delegates rose as one. The explosion of applause shook the rafters of the Washington, D.C., Convention Center.

Through Operation Rescue—beginning in the 1986-87 school year—NEA will provide up to $700,000 to fund dropout and illiteracy prevention programs designed and developed by local Associations. The remaining $1 million will be invested to become a permanent funding source for future education initiatives.

Atlanta, Ga., now has four alternative schools serving dropouts and potential dropouts. At one of them, Rich's Academy, 110 students—age 14 to 21—attend classes under the supervision of a director, four teachers, and four additional staff. The students take a variety of courses under broad categories of math, English, science, and social science.

"We make an extra effort to address our students' human needs," says Association member Joseph Pettigrew, a math teacher. Each school day starts with a 'family group session'; groups of students meet with a male and female staff member for discussion, sharing, counseling. And often before the school day ends, students hear from volunteers—career employees from area businesses—who serve as role models.

What's the success rate at the Academy, now in its 16th year? About 80 percent of those who begin the school year complete it. More than 50 percent stay in school to get their high school diplomas. Some go on to college.

Meanwhile, near Gary, Ind., River Forest Junior/Senior High School in Hobart Township is operating a dropout prevention project that centers around a Study Lab. Hobart Township is low on the socioeconomic scale; many of its adults are unskilled steel mill workers who've lost their jobs.

"The high unemployment rate here contributes to the dropout rate—especially among young men," says Faye Iorio, a counselor at River Forest. "They feel there's no point staying in school when even those with diplomas can't get jobs."

Iorio, a prime mover behind the two-year-old dropout prevention project, concentrates her efforts on seventh, eighth, and ninth graders. She conducts sessions on study skills and school attendance. A certified teacher runs the Study Lab, spending an hour a day with up to five students at a time, instructing them in math and English. There's a close correlation between what goes on in the lab and in the classroom.

"Illiteracy is a major reason many students drop out," Iorio notes. "When students can't read they can't succeed in school. They have low self-esteem and tend to isolate themselves from other students. Eventually, many of them just give up."

Hobart Township Teachers Association members are seeing some positive changes as a result of the program: more regular attendance, higher grades, better peer relationships, stronger self-esteem, more interaction between students and staff—and fewer students dropping out. In fact, many students now *ask* to be part of the Study Lab program.

In Pennsylvania's Allegheny County, with the help of a $900 NEA Hilda Maehling fellowship, K-12 social worker James Cusick is beginning to take a shot at the ever-increasing dropout problem in his school district.

Woodland Hills is five formerly separate districts merged into one under a 1981 court-ordered desegregation plan.

"Students here range from affluent to poor," Cusick says. "We plan to identify potential dropouts, then structure a program that focuses on self-esteem, attendance, academics, discipline—in general, school adjustment and student attitudes toward school."

Three guidance counselors—one from each of the district's middle schools—will be working with Cusick to help implement the ongoing prevention program.

Cusick knows parental support is crucial. "Our focus is on students, but to meet with success, we need parents on our side," he says. "This often means going into the homes."

With the funding available next year under Operation Rescue, many more Association affiliates in communities across the United States will be able to launch their own dropout prevention efforts. The goal set by NEA President Futrell: to cut the dropout rate in half by 1990.

"A lofty goal? Yes," Futrell admits. "But realistic. Necessary. In fact, imperative. The status quo is unacceptable."

—Marian Clayton

High School Graduation Rates

N. Dak.	94.8%	Maine	76.7
Minn.	90.7	N.H.	76.5
Del.	88.9	Ark.	76.2
Iowa	88.0	Mo.	76.2
S. Dak.	85.0	Va.	75.7
Vt.	85.0	Wash.	75.5
Utah	84.5	R.I.	75.2
Nebr.	84.1	Calif.	75.1
Wis.	84.0	Nev.	74.6
Mont.	83.1	**U.S. average**	**73.9**
N.J.	82.7	Mich.	73.4
Kans.	82.5	Oreg.	73.0
Hawaii	82.2	N. Mex.	71.4
Ohio	82.2	Tex.	69.4
Wyo.	81.7	N.C.	69.3
Md.	81.4	Ariz.	68.4
Pa.	79.7	Ky.	68.4
Okla.	79.6	Ala.	67.4
Colo.	79.2	N.Y.	66.7
Ind.	78.3	S.C.	66.2
Conn.	77.9	Ga.	65.9
Idaho	77.9	Fla.	65.5
Alaska	77.8	Tenn.	65.1
Mass.	77.5	Miss.	63.7
W. Va.	77.4	D.C.	58.4
Ill.	77.1	La.	57.2

Source: National Center for Education Statistics

For more information on Operation Rescue, write to NEA Assistant Executive Director Gary Watts, 1201 Sixteenth St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

News Beat

- The new federal fiscal year begins October 1, but the **budget battling** isn't over yet. Congress has okayed $18.3 billion for education, a 2 percent increase over last year. Reagan Administration officials say the President might veto appropriation bills that include provisions for what he considers "excess spending."
- School doors opened this fall to the first signs of serious **teacher shortages** in years. Twenty-two states now allow the hiring of candidates who lack full professional teacher credentials, reports the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. Fifteen additional states have "alternate certification" plans pending.
- The federal Centers for Disease Control have released guidelines to help schools set attendance policies for children stricken with acquired immune deficiency disease. The main conclusion: school-age children with **AIDS** should be permitted to attend classes, but each case should be reviewed individually.
- A blue-ribbon business panel led by Procter & Gamble Chairman Owen Butler released the latest national report on the **state of American education** September 5. The Committee for Economic Development study says school systems should give teachers "more opportunity to contribute to decision making in the schools" and devote more resources to "improving the management capabilities of school administrators."
- The American Medical Association, the nation's largest physicians' organization, announced plans at its recent annual meeting to oppose **corporal punishment** in the schools. Corporal punishment is now illegal in six New England states.
- California and 10 other states have rejected bills mandating **seat belts in school buses** so far this year. The new school year began with bus seat belt requirements in 42 individual school districts across the United States.

WELL PUT!

Ohio Governor Richard Celeste

"...A teacher must have the energy of a harnessed volcano, the efficiency of an adding machine, the memory of an elephant, the understanding of a psychiatrist, the wisdom of Solomon, the tenacity of a spider...the decisiveness of a general, the diplomacy of an ambassador... From my regular visits to schools, I know there's little exaggeration in that description. We expect an awful lot from teachers. And too often their heroic toil goes unrecognized."

THE BEST EDUCATION. . .

GREAT PUBL

EXPENSIVE . . . AND

Does your school district—

► Maintain a student-to-faculty ratio of 14 to 1?

► Sponsor innovative summer school enrichment programs attended by half the student body?

► Offer college-level courses in 17 different subjects?

Almost certainly not. For the overwhelming majority of school districts in the United States today, such an ambitious education program would be virtually unimaginable. What district, after all, could possibly afford it?

In New Trier Township High School District #203, just outside Chicago, the impossible—low student-teacher ratios, a wide array of challenging courses, a year-round academic enrichment program—is possible. New Trier students are getting an education whose depth, variety, and rigor simply stun visiting educators.

New Trier is one of a handful of school districts blessed with both ample financial resources and a community willing to spend those resources on quality education.

Money, some politicians are fond of contending, can't guarantee educational excellence. But the quality of the education offered by school districts like New Trier demonstrates that money, coupled with a talented faculty and staff, can fashion an educational experience that most schools can only dream about providing.

The average school district in the United States spent $3,226 per pupil last year. New Trier Township High School District #203 spent $5,100. In Pennsylvania, outside Philadelphia, the Lower Merion School District devoted $5,807 to every pupil. Connecticut's Greenwich School District spent $4,503.

Do all these dollars above and beyond the national average make a difference for education? You bet they do.

In New Trier, Lower Merion, and Greenwich, those extra dollars, first and foremost, buy professional treatment for school staff. The New Trier, Lower Merion, and Greenwich school districts all understand that attracting and maintaining a quality staff is the first prerequisite for educational excellence.

Each of the three districts has a veteran staff—most teachers have 20 years experience and average more than 14 years in the system. The districts' salaries are all well above national norms. The New Trier high school district averages $39,000, Lower Merion $30,000, Greenwich $31,200.

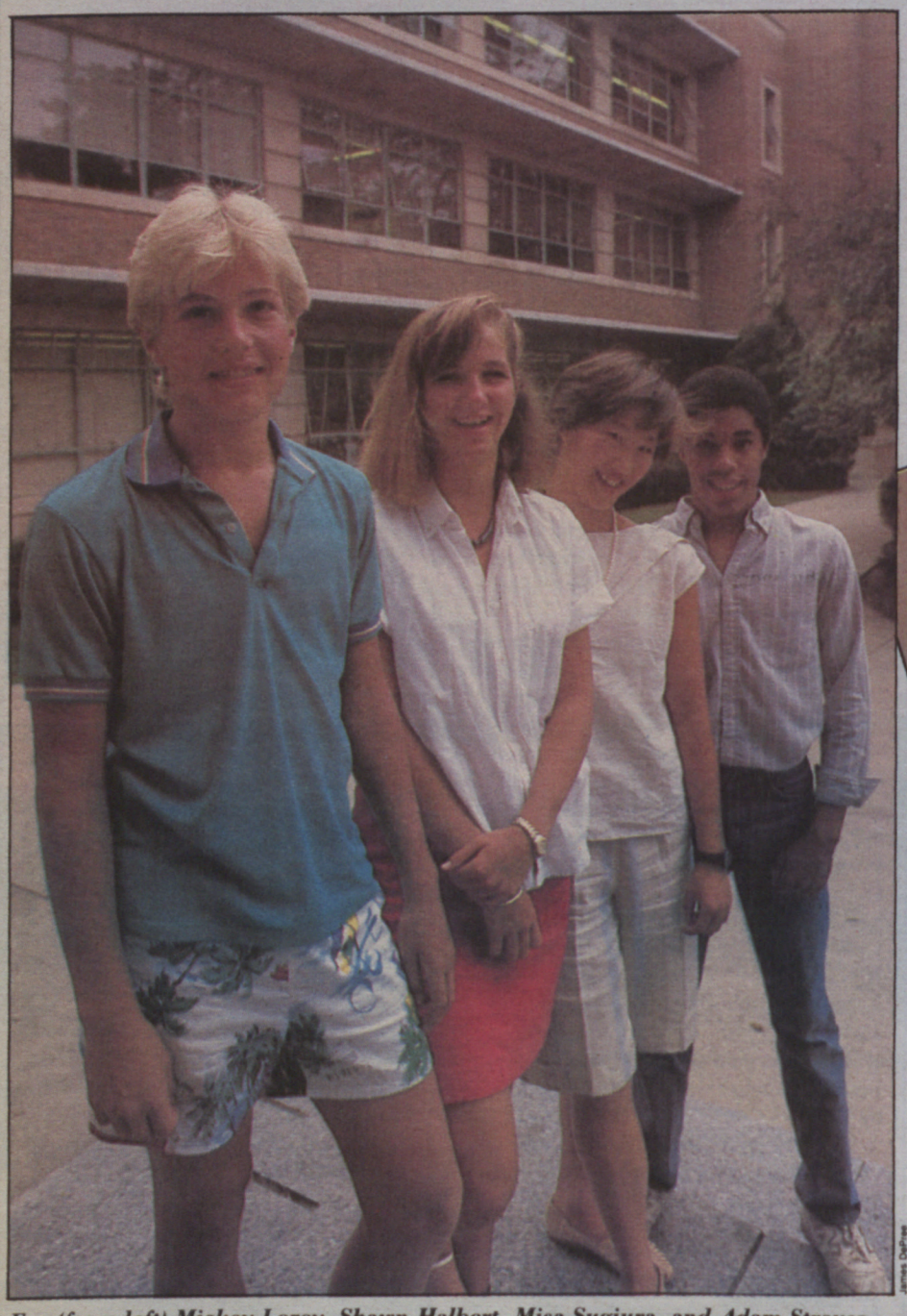
"We view ourselves as career teachers," notes Greenwich Education Association President Nancy Wolf, who adds that 89 percent of the Greenwich faculty have master's degrees. The biggest slice of the $25 million annual budget for New Trier's 3,900-student high school, according to principal Ralph McGee, goes to salaries and benefits for the 300-plus professional staff. With stipends for advisory and coaching duties, a number of New Trier faculty make $50,000 a year.

THREE AT THE TOP

What puts America's best public school systems in a class of their own? In a word: money. In Illinois, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut, three wealthy communities that are willing and able to pay for excellence have teacher salaries and per-pupil spending well above the national averages.

Average Teacher Salary, 1984-85

New Trier Township High School District #203, Winnetka, Ill.	$39,000
Greenwich (Conn.) School District	31,222
Lower Merion School District, Ardmore, Penn.	30,000
United States	23,546



James DePree

For (from left) Mickey Lorey, Shawn Halbert, Misa Sugiura, and Adam Strauss, summer 1985 was no time to be lolling around the pool. All four attended summer school enrichment programs at New Trier High in Winnetka, Ill.

Brad Bower

Part of the Lower Merion (Penn.) education team: from left, teachers Karen Speakman, Steve McCarter, Mike Dougherty, and Lyn Fields; education support staffers Joe Dennis and Frank Carr.

. . . MONEY CAN BUY

IC SCHOOLS WORTH EVERY PENNY

Per-Pupil Spending, 1984-85

New Trier Township High School District #203, Winnetka, Ill.	$5,100
Greenwich (Conn.) School District	4,503
Lower Merion School District, Ardmore, Penn.	5,807
United States	3,226

Median Income, 1980

New Trier Township High School District #203, Winnetka, Ill.	$46,496
Greenwich (Conn.) School District	35,615
Lower Merion School District, Ardmore, Penn.	36,223
United States	19,917

Mike Lydick

Nancy Wolf

All three districts earmark considerable sums for their staff's professional development. New Trier, for example, spends about $150,000 a year for a wide range of professional growth activities.

New Trier High School Education Association President David Currie, who teaches photography, spent a few days last summer working up some new curriculum ideas with the rest of his art department colleagues.

"All faculty members need time to recharge, to keep abreast of new developments and ahead of trends in their subject areas," notes Currie, now in his 18th year at New Trier. "Our Association has played a key role in making sure that sabbaticals and professional growth grants remain available."

The 7,200-student Greenwich school system offers its staff seven half-days and one full day a year for professional development, notes Nancy Wolf, an elementary reading specialist. Offerings vary from sessions on stress management and student testing to seminars on how the brain functions.

In the 5,700-student Lower Merion system, where the local NEA affiliate represents both teachers and educational support staff, staff development programs are equally extensive.

"Just as our teachers are continually working to upgrade themselves, so are our support staff," notes Lower Merion Education Association President Lyn Fields. "Some of our cafeteria workers, for example, have been able to take courses in nutrition at Penn State."

By rewarding teachers and support staff, treating them like professionals, and respecting them as members of the education family, all three districts are able to offer a school program with both breadth and depth. Classes are kept small to give students the maximum individual attention. All three districts offer a full and exciting range of courses. New Trier lists 29 English courses, 23 business education courses, 32 social studies courses, 28 music courses, and 22 math courses—plus advanced placement (AP) courses in most subject areas. Last year more than 300 New Trier students took AP tests for college credit in 17 subjects.

At the same time, the New Trier system offers its students a choice of 25 sports (12 boys-only, 12 girls-only, one coed) and 45 other extracurricular activities that include groups devoted to hosteling, amateur radio, model railroads, and electronic music.

Of course, the best teachers and support staff also need the best materials to work with, and all three school districts sport first-rate resources, including the most up-to-date textbooks, which are regularly reevaluated by faculty. New Trier High has 160 microcomputers and videocassette recorders and a 60,000-volume library media center—plus its own licensed radio and television station. Greenwich High has purchased more than 100 microcomputers, putting the ratio of students to computers at about 22 to 1, compared to the national secondary school ratio of 51 to 1.

As in New Trier and Greenwich, the Lower Merion schools use computers at all grade levels and in most subjects—social studies, English, and the arts, for example, in addition to the traditional science and math applications.

New Trier, Lower Merion, and Greenwich can all also afford the support services essential to quality education. Lower Merion, for example, employs a team of 31 special education teachers and 16 assistants, as well as counselors, social workers, psychologists, and speech therapists.

New Trier High features a counseling system that pairs 30 students to the same faculty adviser for all four high school years. The advisers teach four periods a day instead of five and use the extra period to counsel their students, making sure that, in a school of 3,900, no one gets lost in the crowd.

Greenwich High—built in the 1970s and now enrolling 2,200 students in three grades—divides the student body into four "houses." Each entering sophomore is assigned to one house for most subjects during all three years. An activities center—connected to the four houses—provides a place for all students to socialize, relax, or study. Students' schedules also include an open block period in which they're encouraged to use the resources of a learning center where they can work one on one with teachers.

Mike Lydick

Joel Adelberg

In a large school, notes Greenwich social studies teacher Joel Adelberg, students can easily get an impersonal feeling. The house system makes school more personal—and learning more meaningful.

Would New Trier, Lower Merion, and Greenwich students receive a good education if their districts had fewer dollars available? Undoubtedly. The dedicated and talented staffs in these three systems would see to that.

But would students in these districts get the same top-quality education they enjoy now if fewer dollars were available? Absolutely not. Educational excellence doesn't come cheap.

—Bill Fischer

Closing the Gap Between The Haves and Have Nots

The New Trier, Lower Merion, and Greenwich schools all serve high-income suburbs—communities that can afford to foot the bill for comprehensive, in-depth, quality education.

But most schools don't serve financially well-endowed communities, and, as a result, education suffers. That's because the burden of financing public schools has historically fallen on local communities. Students lucky enough to live in wealthy communities attend schools that are better equipped and more fully staffed than those in middle-income or poor communities.

Over recent years, state governments have begun to chip in with more and more financial aid for local school districts. According to NEA research statistics, states now foot an average 49 percent of public school costs. Local governments pay about 45 percent.

This increased state aid has helped narrow the dollar discrepancies between individual school districts. But discrepancies still remain, and they're huge. For instance, the Lower Merion schools spend $2,000 more per pupil than the average Pennsylvania district does.

States clearly have to do more to support education. But there are limits to what states can contribute. That's why NEA is looking to the federal government for assistance.

The federal level is the one level of government that's not contributing its share of the nation's education expenses. Last year, the federal government funded just 6.2 percent of school costs. To make matters worse, the federal share of the school budget dollar is actually *decreasing*. Five years ago, the federal government was picking up 9 percent of the nation's education expenses.

Federal aid is really a question of whether quality education is or isn't a national priority. If it should be a national priority—as every blue-ribbon report on education over the past three years has concluded—then the woefully small current federal contribution to America's public schools is simply inexcusable.

A good many members of Congress believe it's time for the federal government to step up, not cut back, aid to America's local school districts. Last June, Rep. Augustus Hawkins (D-Calif.) introduced a landmark piece of NEA-backed legislation specifically designed to help local school districts foot the cost of excellence.

This legislation—the School Excellence and Reform Act (SERA)—would infuse $2 billion into education in its first year of operation, with the bulk of that going to local school districts.

Half of SERA's $2 billion would be earmarked for general excellence programs and efforts to improve instruction in math, science, communications skills, technology education, and foreign languages. The other half would be targeted toward early childhood education, school day care, inservice teacher training, dropout prevention, and other programs aimed at traditionally underserved students.

SERA is state-of-the-art legislation. It incorporates several other outstanding bills, including the previously introduced, NEA-backed American Defense Education Act. Congressional hearings on SERA have already begun. Despite the sentiment among lawmakers for cutting domestic spending to reduce the federal budget deficit, NEA analysts on Capitol Hill feel that SERA could pass—if Association members around the country can mobilize public support for it over the coming months.

"Every child in America deserves an education that rivals the quality of the education that school districts in the wealthiest communities offer," says NEA President Mary Hatwood Futrell. "The passage of SERA would be a giant step toward making that goal a reality."

—B.F.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Joe Di Dio

Ending Child Abuse: A Beginning

Teachers are the missing link in helping abused children, Judith Burks believes, because they're the people children trust most outside their families. When a child no longer feels safe at home, the first person he or she often turns to is a teacher.

So it's vitally important that all teachers learn to recognize and respond to "the little signals children send when they're trying to broach this very difficult issue," Burks says.

Judith Burks is the only counselor in Oregon's Bandon School District. For the last three years she's worked with both teachers and children there on child abuse.

This summer, thanks to a $1,000 NEA grant to the Oregon Education Association (OEA), Burks developed a workshop that will be available to local Associations throughout Oregon. It's designed to help teachers understand their legal responsibilities and protections in reporting suspected child abuse, as well as to recognize the signals abused children send and to learn ways teachers can be supportive of these children in their classrooms.

The grant to OEA is one of five new grants—at $1,000 each—funded by NEA's Human and Civil Rights (HCR) unit to help local and state Associations develop programs on child abuse and neglect.

"Abuse and neglect are crimes against our children—and our society," says HCR Director Chuck Williams. "Our grants are designed to assist NEA affiliates in areas with serious child abuse problems—and at the same time to develop models that will be useful to Associations throughout the country."

The other affiliates receiving grants are—

► **The Prince Georges County (Md.) Educators Association**, which will produce a videotape on teacher rights and responsibilities in dealing with child abuse. The tape will be used in in-service workshops that will be linked by an audio hookup with the PGCEA office, where a panel of experts will answer participants' questions. A second part of the PGCEA program will train teachers to make presentations on child abuse at community organizations.

"We're a large, multiethnic suburban system," explains PGCEA President Paul Pinsky, "with 104,000 students and more than 6,000 teachers. The program we're developing with support from NEA and our state Association will enable us to reach teachers in their schools—and citizens in their communities."

► **The Niobrara Education Association** in rural Nebraska, where children have become the helpless victims of the farm crisis that's brought poverty and family turmoil in its wake. The Association will use part of the NEA grant to bring a program to the elementary school to help children articulate their problems—and teachers to deal with them. The rest of the grant will fund a stress workshop for high school students and the 400-member community.

► **The Richland County (S.C.) Education Association**, which has developed a three-part program to help children, teachers, and the community deal with child abuse. The RCEA will conduct in-service workshops for teachers, outreach programs for parents, and an in-school program to teach children safety and survival skills.

► **The Michigan Education Association**, which will conduct five day-long workshops for members to help them deal with the legal and moral issues raised by suspected instances of child abuse in their schools. Out of these workshops, school-based teams will be formed to work with social agencies and community organizations on identifying and preventing child abuse. MEA also plans to develop model school policies for dealing wih child abuse.

—Heidi Steffens

Missing Children: Could They Be in *Your* School?

The kids pictured here have disappeared from their homes. They've been reported to NEA by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, a nonprofit organization funded through the U.S. Department of Justice.

If you think you've seen any of these youngsters in your school or elsewhere, please contact the Center immediately at **800/843-5678.**

Regina Mae Armstrong
Born: 3-16-79.
Last seen: 6-18-85 in Orlando, Fla.
3'6", 45 lbs.,
hazel-brown eyes,
blondish-brown hair.

Scott Leonard Smith
Born: 7-18-67.
Last seen: 4-24-83 in Brattleboro, Vt.
5'4", 130 lbs., blue eyes, medium brown hair, missing right middle fingertip and part of right eyebrow.

Colleen Emily Orsborn
Born: 3-3-69.
Last seen: 3-15-84 in Daytona Beach, Fla.
5'2", 95 lbs.,
hazel eyes, light brown hair.

WASHINGTON WATCH

Is a Fair Tax Code Possible?

The idea of tax reform has caught fire in the nation's capital, igniting new debate over one of the biggest pocketbook issues in years: how should the tax burden be divided?

Last spring, President Reagan offered his answer to that question. His "tax simplification" proposal now has Congress, businesses, and public-interest groups taking sides on the plan's far-reaching implications for the way wealth is distributed among individuals, corporations, localities, and states.

NEA welcomes the debate. Tax reform is long overdue. Down through the years, the Association has consistently pressed for a fair and comprehensive restructuring of the tax code. President Reagan's tax plan is one of several now before Congress, and NEA Government Relations analysts are carefully evaluating the merits and drawbacks of them all. For each proposed tax reform plan, NEA analysts are asking:

► Does this proposal promote equity, fairness, and balance?

► Does it assure adequate revenues to finance education and other critical public services?

► Is it in accord with basic national priorities—especially the drive for excellence in education?

► Will it result in a tax structure that's both workable and acceptable?

President Reagan's tax package has so far received the most media attention. It would reduce the number of tax brackets from the present 14 to three and wipe out many current deductions and other tax benefits.

Of all the Reagan plan's provisions, none has stirred more outcry than the elimination of the most widely used federal tax deduction of all: the deduction for taxes paid to state and local governments.

Ending these deductions would bring in an extra $33 billion a year in federal tax revenues—assuming that state and local taxes stayed at current levels. But that's unlikely. *Washington Post* reporter David Broder, in fact, has called President Reagan's tax-on-a-tax proposal a "$33 billion gorilla" that could wreak havoc in every state and every public school.

Why? The average American family that itemizes would experience a 40 percent increase in the "true economic cost" of its property taxes if it had to start paying federal income tax on them, estimates Sen. Daniel P. Moynihan (D-N.Y.).

Joe Di Dio

While tax reform is urgently needed, the Administration's plan "falls short of tax equity and is actually counterproductive for education," NEA Vice-President Keith Geiger noted in summer testimony before the Senate Finance Committee.

The result? School districts would have a harder time winning taxpayer approval for necessary local tax increases. Over time, Moynihan figures the loss of state and local tax deductibility could lead to a 20 percent drop in education spending.

Eliminating the federal income deduction for state and local taxes would be bad news for America's schools and colleges. Other provisions in President Reagan's proposed tax simplification plan would increase the total tax burden on many of the men and women who work in education.

According to estimates by the accounting firm Touche Ross & Co., many families with two children and two working spouses would pay significantly *more* in federal taxes if the Administration's plan were enacted.

The accounting firm gives the example of a family of four with each spouse earning $25,000. Using currently available deductions and credits, they'd pay $3,984 in federal income taxes. Under the President's proposal, this family's tax burden would jump to $4,362, an increase of over $378.

As the tax debate rages in the weeks ahead, NEA will continue—in concert with other education organizations, unions, and parent groups—to testify and lobby for *true* reform—and the defeat of any plan that could spell disaster for Association members and the schools they work in.

State Side

PACIFIC

Nevada's education budget is almost 25 percent bigger than it was last year, thanks to a banner legislative session.

The credit goes to Nevada State Education Association members, a governor committed to improving public education, and legislators willing to spend the dollars to make that commitment a reality, reports NSEA President Sue Strand.

The 1985 legislature appropriated funding for a minimum 11 percent salary increase for teachers in the 1985-86 school year and a minimum 3 to 5 percent increase next year. (Most Nevada teachers had gone two years in a row with no salary increase.)

In addition, every teacher returning to the classroom this fall received a one-time retention bonus from the state: a check for 5 percent of his or her 1984-85 salary.

"We're particularly proud of Governor Richard Bryan's unwavering support of education," says Strand, "and of the NSEA members across the state who—through letters, phone calls, and personal meetings—took education's message to their legislators."

The 1985-86 school year has brought a welcome change for teachers in Hawaii—movement up the salary schedule, for the first time in seven years.

Hawaii is unique in having a single, statewide school district. All public employee contracts must be approved by the state legislature.

The major issue in last spring's negotiations was the fact that many teachers had been frozen on Step 1 of the schedule since 1978. Under the new two-year contract bargained by NEA's Hawaii State Teachers Association, everyone (except those already on the top step) moves up one step.

In addition, the contract provides every employee in the 9,000-member bargaining unit with a salary increase of $1,278 this year and $1,342 in 1986.

Thanks to Association lobbying, the legislature has also passed a bill allowing an entirely new salary schedule to be bargained during the 1987 negotiations.

MIDWEST

The Michigan Education Association took on a mammoth task—improving public school employees' pension and health benefits *without* adding costs to the state. MEA's statewide lobbying drive overcame the legislative obstacles and won important gains for both current and future retirees.

Among the pluses in the new MEA-backed state retirement law signed by Gov. Jim Blanchard in July: 90 percent state-paid health benefits for spouses and dependents, a one-time 8 percent pension increase, a 3 percent guaranteed annual increase, and a voluntary (4 percent of gross salary) member-investment fund beginning January 1, 1987.

Under prior law, retirees' health benefits had been determined by annual legislative appropriations—and so were often cut when budgets got tight. The new law assures retirees better benefits through long-range funding.

"Phone calls, letters, and other contacts from rank-and-file members stripped legislators of their excuse that they hadn't heard from 'folks back home,'" notes MEA President Larry Chunovich. In the final push in the Senate, MEA placed in legislators' hands some 50,000 member signatures that showed the Association's widespread grassroots support.

"The new law will allow our members to retire with dignity," Chunovich adds. "It's a tangible success story for those who ask why we as professionals become politically involved."

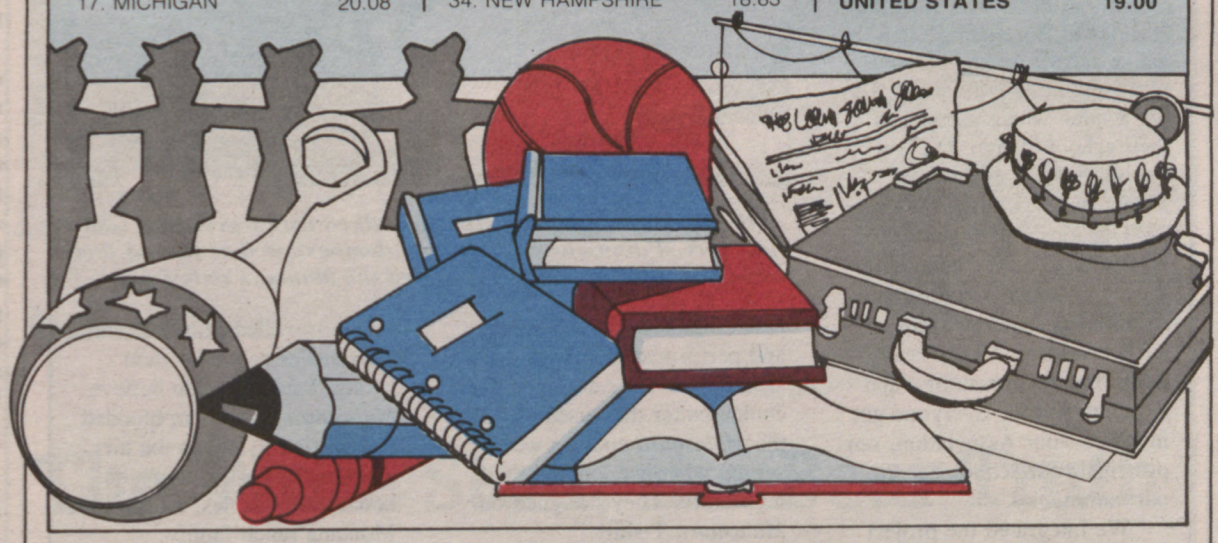
HOW THE STATES STACK UP

What Share of the Population Is Age 5 to 17?

According to NEA's *Rankings of the States, 1985,* 19 percent of the nation's population is of traditional school age (5 to 17). As the table shows, the school-age portion of the population ranges from a low of about one in every six people in Florida to a high of more than one in four in Utah.

Population Age 5-17 as Percent of Total Population (Estimated)

1. UTAH	25.36%	18. INDIANA	20.06	35. MISSOURI	18.77
2. IDAHO	22.58	19. NORTH DAKOTA	19.97	36. WASHINGTON	18.74
3. MISSISSIPPI	22.17	20. ARIZONA	19.49	37. COLORADO	18.63
4. LOUISIANA	21.31	21. MAINE	19.46	38. KANSAS	18.58
5. NEW MEXICO	21.21	22. OHIO	19.45	39. VIRGINIA	18.40
6. ALASKA	21.20	23. NEBRASKA	19.43	40. DELAWARE	18.27
7. WYOMING	21.14	24. TENNESSEE	19.42	41. NEW JERSEY	18.20
8. TEXAS	20.49	25. OKLAHOMA	19.41	42. NEW YORK	18.08
9. SOUTH CAROLINA	20.45	26. IOWA	19.35	43. MARYLAND	18.03
10. ALABAMA	20.40	27. WISCONSIN	19.28	44. NEVADA	18.00
11. GEORGIA	20.37	28. NORTH CAROLINA	19.21	45. CALIFORNIA	17.95
12. SOUTH DAKOTA	20.25	29. ILLINOIS	19.16	46. PENNSYLVANIA	17.91
13. WEST VIRGINIA	20.24	30. MINNESOTA	19.05	47. CONNECTICUT	17.50
14. KENTUCKY	20.23	31. HAWAII	18.96	48. MASSACHUSETTS	17.30
15. ARKANSAS	20.22	32. VERMONT	18.87	49. RHODE ISLAND	17.26
16. MONTANA	20.15	33. OREGON	18.85	50. FLORIDA	16.32
17. MICHIGAN	20.08	34. NEW HAMPSHIRE	18.83	**UNITED STATES**	**19.00**



WEST

During the summer, thou-sands of members of the Texas State Teachers Association filed grievances over their placement on new state-mandated career ladders.

The hullabaloo erupted just before school ended last spring, when individual school districts announced the identities of teachers who would be placed on the first rung of the career ladder. (Some districts put their names in the local paper, while in others officials threatened to terminate teachers who told anyone they'd been selected!)

The career ladder, which will eventually have four rungs, is one element of the massive school reform bill passed by the Texas legislature in summer 1984. The lawmakers defined the general standards of eligibility but didn't appropriate enough money in the first year to enable districts to put all the eligible teachers on level one.

As a result, school officials have too often resorted to dubious or illegal methods for distinguishing among basically equivalent people. In the Irving school district, for example, they gave points for low absenteeism (a policy that discriminates against women), while in McAllen, they arbitrarily stamped last year's evaluations with new terminology to retrofit old judgments to new requirements.

TSTA has filed adminstrative class actions against districts using such illegal or unfair methods.

After coming up empty-handed on education salaries the past two years, the Oklahoma legislature finally voted in July to raise the state-funded minimum salary that local districts must pay teachers and other professional educators by at least $2,000. The minimum salary for first-year teachers went from $12,060 to $15,060.

State-funded salaries for education support staff were increased by 8 percent. Most school districts supplement state-funded salaries for all employees from their own funds.

Comments OEA president Weldon Davis: "The Association's success resulted from three initiatives: expansion of lobbying efforts to include hundreds of member lobbyists, our 'Promises To Keep' campaign that provided local Associations with persuasive information for the public, and a rally of 10,000 Association members at the state capitol last winter that was living proof of educators' seriousness about addressing the problems of the schools."

NORTHEAST

The Bay State's new two-year, $210-million education reform law doesn't go far enough, say leaders of the Massachusetts Teachers Association.

The law, which took effect in September, includes a number of provisions now being hotly debated in other states. It calls for beginning teacher salaries to be raised to $18,000 over two years and makes available $1,100 'salary enhancement grants' for veteran teachers over that same period, subject to local approval.

The measure also establishes Equal Educational Opportunity Grants of state aid for school districts currently spending less than 85 percent of the statewide per-pupil average; provides funds for the development of prekindergarten, early childhood, and day care programs; and requires basic skills testing for students and competency testing for new teachers.

Noting the law's failure to address such key issues as class size, MTA President Nancy Finkelstein calls the measure just a beginning.

"Our fear," she says, "is that the legislature will think it has accomplished education reform, when important issues have yet to be dealt with."

SOUTHEAST

The Alabama Education Asso-ciation didn't let education reform stop with raising teacher pay. The Association is also playing a major role in revamping the way teachers are trained.

AEA Executive Secretary Paul Hubbert chairs the state reform commission's Teacher Preparation Committee. "We're going to have to take some steps to ensure quality control," he says. A recent AEA poll indicates that 48 percent of the state's teachers feel their professional training was inadequate.

In addition to exploring a system for evaluating and certifying undergraduate training programs, the committee will be considering fifth-year training programs and alternate certification. Thanks to the Association's initiative, the committee will rely heavily on a 20-member advisory council representing teachers, supervisors, deans of teacher preparation colleges, and industry.

Local Look

NEW MEXICO

"Teacher shortages should be countered with higher salaries, not lower standards," contends Lynne Garramone-Mason, president of NEA-Santa Fe. But the reverse has happened in her district.

This fall, school opened in Santa Fe with eight classrooms in the charge of two-person teams of interns. The 16 novices, all 1985 liberal arts graduates of St. John's College in Santa Fe, have had a summer's worth of professional education courses. They'll each get $7,000 for the school year as employees of the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, which operates the intern program. After completing more education courses during 1985-86 (including another summer session), they'll be eligible for state certification.

Says Garramone-Mason: "We're all for attracting new people into the profession, but not if it means giving partly trained interns the responsibilities of fully certificated teachers.

"Nor do we think part-time supervision—of 16 interns by two teachers—is adequate," she adds. "Had the Association been consulted, a stronger program—with better results, we think, for both future teachers and present elementary-secondary students—would have ensued."

MARYLAND

Who will teach the children?

The Teachers' Association of Baltimore County, Inc. (TABCO) posed that question last spring in a professional public relations campaign designed to alert the public not only to a probable teacher shortage, but also to the need for higher teacher salaries, more instructional supplies, and improved maintenance of school buildings.

The local school board and PTA worked with the 5,300-member Association on the campaign, which asked its theme question on bumper stickers, radio spots, and in newspaper ads, providing a phone number for people to call for more information. Callers received leaflets explaining that within the next five years, 40 percent of the county's teachers will be eligible to retire and that colleges aren't graduating their necessary replacements.

"The campaign paid off," reports TABCO president Stephen Sirkin. "Before finalizing his budget, the county executive met with teachers and listened to their concerns. As a result, he recommended—and the county council approved—a 6.5 percent salary increase for teachers, compared with only a 4 percent increase for other public employees." (Although TABCO and the county school board had negotiated this increase in 1983 as part of a three-year agreement, it was subject to approval by the county executive and the county council.)

Other locals, both in Maryland and out of state, and at least one state Association are now asking TABCO for advice on their own public information campaigns.

PENNSYLVANIA

The jailing of a nine-member school board in July culminated 18 months of stalemate at the bargaining table for the 116-member Penn Cambria Education Association (PCEA).

The unorthodox prison stay—shortened from the original 15-to-150 days to four hours by a legal appeal—was a first for an entire board in the Keystone State. The sentence was imposed when the board ignored a court order to make up as many teacher strike days as possible by keeping the district's four schools open until June 28.

Last January's two-month strike was just one of the tactics PCEA has resorted to in its marathon efforts to get a new contract and persuade board members that they shouldn't expect teachers to go from a seven- to a seven-and-a-half-hour day with no additional compensation.

By closing schools 18 days before the mandated date, the board was not only violating a court order but also trying to further shortchange district teachers, PCEA leaders charge.

The result of the board's humiliating stint behind bars? Suggests PCEA President Mary Ann Hazlett, "I hope we've managed to bring board members to their senses so they're more willing to negotiate rather than working to break us as they've tried in the past."

HONORING MONTANA'S PREHISTORIC HERITAGE

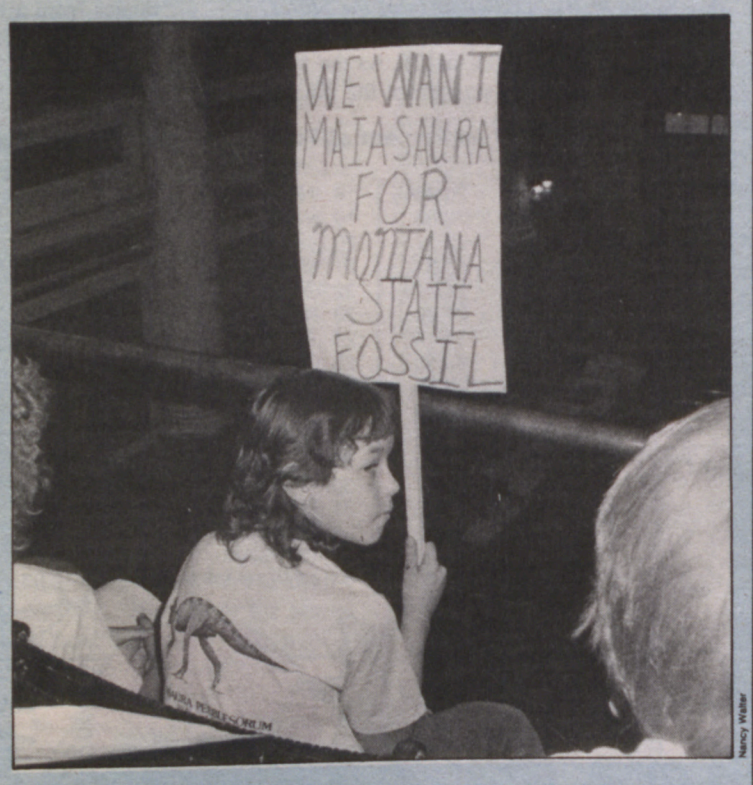
Sixth Graders Turn Fossil into Law

Many millennia have passed since *Maiasaura peeblesorum* roamed Montana. But thanks to the 115 sixth graders at Livingston Middle School, the duck-billed dinosaur is now the official state fossil.

It all began last October in Helen Peterson's sixth grade science classroom. Before Peterson and other members of the Livingston Education Association (LEA) were through, their students had lobbied at the state legislature in Helena; made T-shirts, cookies, models, and posters of their own *Maiasaura* design; worked with curators at the Museum of the Rockies in Bozeman; gotten the active support of the community—and hosted Governor Ted Schwinden when he came to their school to sign into law the bill making *Maiasaura* Montana's official fossil.

"Our kids will never forget *Maiasaura*," says Nancy Hopkins, Livingston's sixth grade math teacher and last year's LEA president. "They really think they're something—and we think so too. Everyone got involved—our Association, our principal, our school system, our community.

"We integrated the project into every aspect of the sixth grade curriculum," Hopkins adds. "Those students really learned the Montana political process. They wrote papers about *Maiasaura*—and created and performed their own dinosaur songs. They designed the cookie-cutter they used to make the *Maiasaura* cookies we served when we lobbied the legislature. They designed our *Maiasaura* T-shirt."



At the capitol: Livingston students talked with legislators, testified, served dinosaur cookies, and demonstrated as part of their drive to have **Maiasaura** *proclaimed the Montana state fossil.*

Maiasaura peeblesorum, which was unique to Montana, is changing the way scientists think about dinosaurs. *Maiasaura* (Latin for "good mother dinosaur") travelled in herds, and the females cared for their young. Scientists also believe *Maiasaura* was warm-blooded and carried its tail in the air. The second part of its name honors the Peebles, a long-time Montana ranch family.

Whatever impact *Maiasaura* ends up having on science and the state of Montana—there are 115 children in Livingston who'll never forget.

CALIFORNIA

"It was a hard year," recalls San Diego's Classified Employees Association President Doris Nielsen, "but it was exciting." And last May, CEA/NEA members had two major victories to show for their hard work.

First came settlement of their second NEA contract covering the school district's 1,200 office, technical, and business service employees, who had worked for nearly a year without a contract as the tough negotiations dragged on. The 30-month agreement, retroactive to July 1, 1984, meets all CEA's basic demands, including raises totaling 19½ to 31 percent, binding arbitration, and a strong prohibition against the district's subcontracting or contracting out work.

Just weeks after the contract settlement, San Diego paraprofessionals voted to join CEA/NEA by a vote of 789 to 26. The local Association now represents 2,900 workers in the San Diego schools.

"We start negotiating the paraprofessional contract this month," says Nielsen. "And we've every confidence that our united membership and NEA support will result in another excellent agreement."

SOUTH DAKOTA

Not content to rest on their laurels as leaders of a strong local, Mitchell Education Association officers, building reps, and committee chairs took time in August for a whole-day retreat to assess their progress, examine their leadership roles, and develop strategies for the new school year.

"Our purpose with this planning session was to ensure that we continue to meet the needs of our 150 members," explains MEA President Doreen Gusmire.

MEA is known for implementing programs that garner media attention and community support both for public education and for the Association. Last fall, for example, during American Education Week, MEA picked up on an idea from the Olympics by having a boy and girl from the district's cross-country team run from school to school carrying the "torch of learning."

VIRGINIA

Science teachers at the 17 middle and secondary schools in Chesterfield (just outside Richmond) have joined forces to improve classroom conditions.

Over the past several years, the teachers had complained individually to administrators about safety hazards, shortages of materials and equipment, and poor teacher education and curriculum development—but the problems only grew worse.

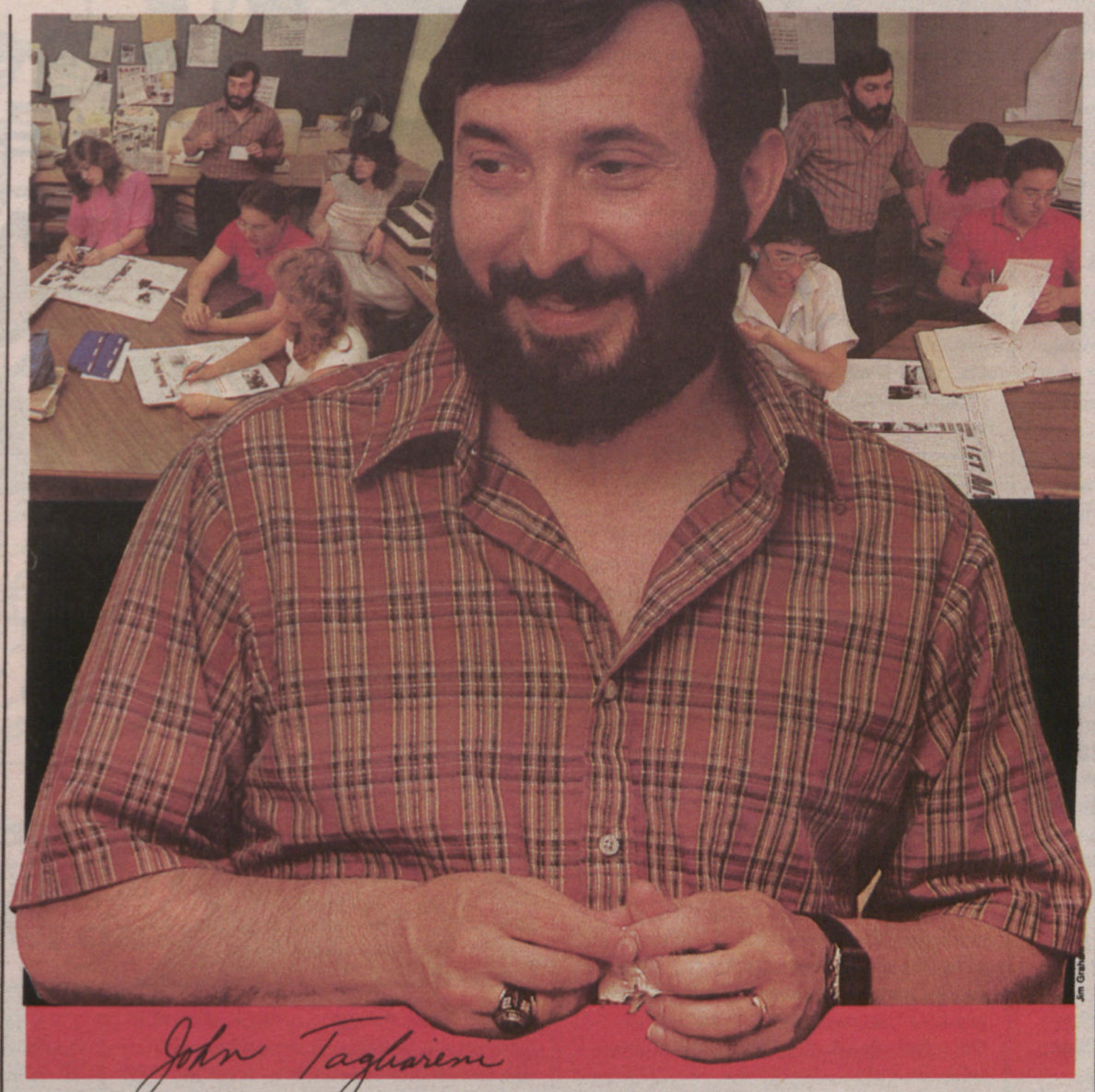
So last September the 1,250-member Chesterfield Education Association (CEA) formed its own science caucus to address the issues. Caucus members surveyed each of the 17 schools and the teachers involved.

The result was a detailed 25-page report that CEA tried to present to the school board in June. The board was hostile and refused to listen.

Over the summer, CEA members managed to meet informally with certain board members and get past their resistance. Now, CEA caucus chair Lee Hayes reports, the mood has changed so much that the board has begun compiling its own report and seeking teacher input.

"We're hopeful that we can work with the new science supervisor and new director of curriculum to solve our problems," Hayes adds.

Meet:



The Write Stuff, the Bear Truth

As John Tagliareni strides through the halls of Bergenfield (N.J.) High School, students pause from shoving books into lockers and turn to salute him with the greeting, "Hi, Mr. T."

This 37-year-old Association member was one of five journalism teachers nationwide honored by the Dow Jones Newspaper Fund last year for advocacy of journalism education. As faculty adviser to the school newspaper Bear Facts *since 1973, Tagliareni has seen his student reporters take more than 70 individual awards and 65 staff awards in national, state, and local competitions. For the past five years* Bear Facts *has earned a Medalist rating from the Columbia Scholastic Press Association, placing it among the top high school papers in the nation.*

NEA Communications staff writer Ed Gonzalez spent a day in the Bear Facts *newsroom recently with Tagliareni and his students.*

What distinguishes outstanding high school newspapers from average ones?
On too many school papers, kids don't really have the opportunity to develop, because the attitude is that it's just a little high school paper. The adviser sees it that way, the principal sees it that way, so the students see it that way too. Nobody really takes it seriously.

On the better school papers, journalism is journalism. The whole approach is professional.

Bear Facts emphasizes in-depth features where students get serious practice in how to go about reporting. They get to cover complex issues, controversial issues. For example, we recently interviewed *Penthouse* publisher Bob Guccione—a one-time Bergenfield student and former *Bear Facts* reporter. A lot of school papers wouldn't touch an interview like that with a 10-foot pole.

How do you feel about censorship of student writing?
I'm the only adult at the school who sees the paper before it goes to press. I take the approach that yes, teenagers are still kids, but they're growing up and they're well aware of many things. I've found that treating them like adults often leads them to act like adults. If they want to cover suicide, or human sexuality, or school vandalism, or other issues that are on their minds, we shouldn't put restrictions in their way.

It just doesn't make sense for social studies teachers to teach students about freedom of the press if the principal is going to tell them they can't print a story about asbestos hazards or substandard school facilities. These subjects are perfectly legitimate for a high school newspaper to cover.

Aren't there any topics that are off limits?
Sure. We can't publish anything that's obscene or pornographic, or anything that would substantially interfere with the operation of the school—such as calling for a walkout.

But the courts have consistently defended student press rights, ever since 1969 when the Supreme Court held that students don't lose their First Amendment rights at the schoolhouse door. That ruling, *Tinker v. Des Moines*, had a definite effect on high school journalism. You saw a big change nationally at that point. Students realized that, at least theoretically, they had the opportunity to write about any subject the professional press can write about.

In practice, of course, they need an adviser who's willing to stand behind them, and a school administration that's not afraid of being criticized or having controversial subjects aired.

What tips would you give other advisers trying to upgrade the quality of their school newspapers?
You have to be aggressive. You can't wait for things to come to you. For example, when you finally win an award, take it to the superintendent, to the principal. Don't be afraid to show it off. It's fabulous publicity for the district. That builds support.

It's hard to deny something that's successful and growing and has a life of its own. But you have to build gradually. It's hard. You don't get people's respect until you earn it—by winning competitions, by being judged from the outside as responsible and fair.

First make sure you and your staff are strong on the basics. If you're green, and the kids are green, I wouldn't advise tackling something controversial. Use discretion.

How do the writing skills of your current students compare to those of 15 years ago?
There's no decline with this group. What I'm dealing with on the newspaper are the kids who are at the top of their class.

In the regular classroom, it's hard to say. Probably most teachers would say there's been a decline.

One of the problems is that many students don't keep up with current events. You mention something in the papers and you get a lot of blank stares. They're not interested, unfortunately.

Another problem is that a lot of them are getting too involved in jobs. I think it's good for kids to work part-time. But I'd rather see them involved in school, or extracurricular activities.

I feel employers exploit them. They say to themselves: Well, here I have a kid who's young, ambitious, wants to work—I'll let him work until 11 at night. The kid is exhausted the next day in class.

Work can be a positive experience, but the kids are placing too much emphasis on material goods—the Walkman, the designer jeans. There's a lot of hype out there.

Were you ever a newspaper reporter?
When I was a student at Jersey City State College, I worked nights as a part-time reporter for the weekly *Secaucus Home News*. I was putting myself through school, after my father died. I'd cover town council meetings, the board of education, the police blotter.

I loved it. I was only 19 years old, and to me it was very exciting.

Why did you decide to teach journalism instead of being a working reporter?
I knew if I became a reporter it would be a hectic life. You start out at the bottom, and the hours are totally crazy. I wanted to settle down, get married.

And then I liked the idea of working with young people. So in my junior year, I made a more definite decision to be a teacher. I kept my English major and added education classes. It's a decision I don't regret. By teaching journalism, I've been able to blend both interests.

More students are interested in journalism careers than there are jobs in the field. Which ones do you encourage?
I'll encourage someone who has talent, ability, drive, and ambition. They have to like writing, and they have to be inquisitive.

But I tell them all the reality, which is that it's a very competitive field and you shouldn't count on going to work directly for the *New York Times*. Lots of people go through journalism school and don't get jobs. And even if they do, the money's not the greatest, unless they hit the big time.

Is there a particular philosopy you try to impart to your students?
I tell them, "Be accurate and be responsible." It's very easy for them to get these media images of reporting as a glamour job. I want them to understand the basic nuts-and-bolts of journalism: meeting deadlines, and being accountable for what you write. The typesetter and the printer have other jobs to run; they have no time for kids' excuses about why they need a late correction on *Bear Facts*.

Writing for the school newspaper is not just a mark in the gradebook. Students learn that in the real world there are penalties attached to things. If you mess up in print, people are going to come and see you about it.

When an administrator or another teacher looks up one of our reporters to tell him or her, "This is inaccurate and could cause repercussions in the community," that's real life—that's accountability. It's not a pleasant experience, but it's a learning experience that's hard to get in a classroom.

IN THE CLASSROOM

Andy Geiser, now a junior at the University of Hawaii, remembers when reading was an exercise in futility—a painful and energy-sapping experience that he finally could no longer endure.

"When it came time to do a book report in high school, I turned to shortcuts," recalls Geiser. "I'd read the title page, the back cover, the chapter headings. From there, I'd let my imagination take over."

Such "wing-it" techniques worked for Geiser, who maintained a B average through much of high school. But when his parents sent him to a tough college prep school during his junior year, his grades first dipped, then dove—to D's and F's.

"I guess things kind of caught up with me," he admits. "I went from being what teachers call a bright kid to a troubled kid to a lazy kid to a kid who was no longer motivated. I stopped caring."

Geiser turned 17 before he discovered that an undetected handicap—dyslexia—accounted for his frustration. Geiser also found that he wasn't alone.

According to the National Institutes of Health, dyslexia causes some 15 percent of the nation's schoolchildren—primarily boys—to agonize over primers, stumble through textbooks, panic when asked to read aloud, and dread spelling bees. Many, like Geiser, approach the end of their K-12 education before someone notices they're working far below their potential and takes a shot at a diagnosis.

In some cases, diagnosis may prove to be the beginning of a new problem rather than the end to the old.

"It's an outrage, but dyslexics are often labeled slow or even mentally retarded, when they're usually of average or above average intelligence," exclaims Association member Mary Lee Enfield, coordinator of programs for children with learning disabilities in the Bloomington, Minn., schools.

"The psychological burdens of being misunderstood," adds Enfield, "show up in behavioral problems later on. Think how it would feel to know that you're a bright person and then to fail—over and over again."

The frustrations of dyslexia have neurological roots. In fact, biological common denominators among sufferers have recently come to light as medical discoveries reveal the dyslexic's brain to be different under the microscope from the brains of non-language-disabled people.

The result? Neurological abnormalities scramble the language processing center of the brain and make chaos of the mental processes required for reading and writing. Dyslexics understand the language but have trouble with its printed symbols. They may reverse letters, read *b* as *d*, or see *red* as *rud*.

Most researchers agree that dyslexia is incurable, but not—and here lies the hope—untreatable. With the right instruction, enormous strides can be made.

"Proper reconstructive teaching—if begun early—can not only alleviate most of the handicap, but also prevent most or all of the crippling mental and emotional damage that results from school failure," asserts David Gow, headmaster of the Gow School in South Wales, N.Y.—a preparatory school for dyslexic boys.

Jason is a bright eight-year-old dyslexic who has trouble sitting still in his third grade class at Hazelwood Elementary in Renton, Wash. Today he's at the board executing a now familiar ritual. Chalk in hand, he slowly traces a large letter *H* on the board. His arm movements are gradual but purposeful as he sounds the letter aloud. "H," he pronounces triumphantly.

Jason will learn all 26 letters through this methodical approach to phonics. *See. Hear. Feel.* The emphasis is on the senses, and each reinforces the other. This multisensory technique—known as the Slingerland approach—guides students through the alphabet to the point where they're blending sounds and reading words, sentences, paragraphs, even whole books.

Jason is lucky. The Renton school district is the former province of Beth Slingerland, a classroom teacher who pioneered this approach to teaching dyslexics 50 years ago, working with education psychologist Anna Gillingham, who in turn teamed with neuropsychologist Samuel Orton.

"Dr. Orton's basic principle is that you begin with the smallest linguistic unit (the letter) because these kids do not work with whole words," explains Beverly Wolf, a former Association member who left the classroom to serve as dean of faculty at the Slingerland Institute near Renton.

"A multisensory approach ensures that a child who's weak in, say, the visual modalities is not stymied," Wolf adds. "We bring auditory and kinesthetic motor capacities into play at the same time—as 'reinforcers.' When we've taught a few letters, we're ready to teach how to blend letters and how to spell."

Largely through word of mouth, the Slingerland approach has spread to schools throughout the country, from Anchorage, Alaska, to Berlin, N.H. Some districts, like Highland Park in Dallas, Texas, have found the technique

Keys to Detection

Teachers who recognize the symptoms of dyslexia "can prevent their students from the psychological trauma of going through life with an undiagnosed handicap," stresses dyslexia activist Andy Geiser.

The most common symptoms:

1. Difficulty learning to read.
2. Inability to write down even simple thoughts.
3. Problems with speech (late language development, persistent baby talk, and poor articulation). A child who has not achieved clarity of speech by age seven or eight should be watched.
4. Short attention span and general restlessness.
5. Perceptual problems (confusing *put* and *but*, *saw* and *was*, *on* and *no*, *sung* and *snug*).
6. Difficulty understanding oral directions.
7. Coordination deficits, especially those involving small motor coordination (inability to cut along a dotted line, inability to color within the confines of an indicated area, difficulty tying knots).
8. Weak retention of material previously learned.
9. Reversal of symbols in reading, writing, and mathematics (letters and numbers).
10. Sequencing deficiencies (difficulty learning the days of the week or months of the year in order.)
11. Awkwardness in self-expression.
12. A high level of frustration; a tendency to give up when learning.
13. Difficulty in separating the essential from the trivial.
14. Difficulty understanding abstractions (e.g., reciting proverbs without comprehending their meaning).
15. The most obvious symptom of all—*poor spelling*.

Source: The Gow School

Bob LaPree/PHOTOWORKS

IN THE CLASSROOM

EDISON, ROCKEFELLER, RODIN, AND THE READING PROBLEM

A surprising number of historical giants may have something in common with nonreaders in your classroom.

so effective they've made proficiency in it a condition for hiring elementary school teachers.

At Lancaster (N.H.) Elementary School, Association member and English teacher Geraldine Tetreault is among nine or 10 teachers who apply the Slingerland method faithfully. Because early detection is critical, first-graders take pre-reading screening tests to diagnose language disabilities.

"The emphasis is on early intervention," Tetreault explains. "Like most learning disorders, dyslexia must be spotted early. Our ability to help drops with each passing year."

Tetreault recalls her frustration with trying to teach fifth-grade language-disabled students before her training in the Slingerland approach: "I finally threw up my hands and said, 'I've done all I can for these students and I need to stop blaming myself if some can't be taught.'"

The following summer, Tetreault completed the multisensory training and returned to a sixth grade class in the fall with some of the same students she'd had the year before.

"It was amazing to see the progress of students that I'd been convinced were unteachable," she reflects.

In Bloomington, Minn., the commitment to helping dyslexics means that not everyone is taught to read the same way.

"The basic philosophy of our 16-year-old Project READ is that the four major systems of teaching reading are equally valid," explains Mary Lee Enfield, coordinator. "We work against the stubborn—and disturbingly common—assumption that the whole-word system deserves a privileged position. Children with dyslexia seem to fall through that system and end up in the bottom reading groups. Without proper intervention, they become new members of our nation's illiterate population."

Project READ employs trained classroom teachers to introduce their peers to a structured language approach that emphasizes phonics. The program currently extends from first through ninth grade, addressing the needs of some 1,500 students.

The READ focus is on making students comfortable with the fundamentals of language before they advance to polysyllabics and sentence and paragraph construction. By grade 5 or 6, the majority are reading well enough so they don't suffer in other subject areas.

Recent findings by the Johns Hopkins Medical School should give Enfield, Tetreault, and other educators dedicated to helping dyslexics a real sense of accomplishment—and hope. The Hopkins study of dyslexic boys who had attended the Gow School in South Wales, N.Y., between 1940 and 1977 found that 67 percent had graduated from college—with 32 percent majoring in the humanities or social sciences. More than 50 percent reported positive attitudes toward reading for pleasure, and 24 percent read more than 10 books a year.

These findings come as no surprise to those who have immersed themselves in the literature on dyslexia. History is heavily punctuated with the achievements of men and women who as youngsters struggled to see the difference between *b* and *d*. Thomas Edison is believed to have suffered considerable difficulty learning because of language problems. Nelson Rockefeller memorized speeches because he found reading so difficult. According to the Orton Dyslexia Society, others believed to have suffered from dyslexia include Woodrow Wilson, Gen. George Patton, Hans Christian Andersen, Leonardo da Vinci, Bruce Jenner, Steve McQueen, and Auguste Rodin.

David Gow, who's spent a lifetime teaching victims of this mysterious malady, concludes, "The first thing public schools have to realize is that this is a terribly common learning disorder. There are kids in almost every classroom who are bright and motivated and bursting with potential, but who are written off as lazy or indolent...or insolent. They're seen as lost causes."

Teachers who take the time to identify and help these kids are finding out just how often the 'lost cause' becomes a cause for celebration.

—Vicky Lytle

Resources

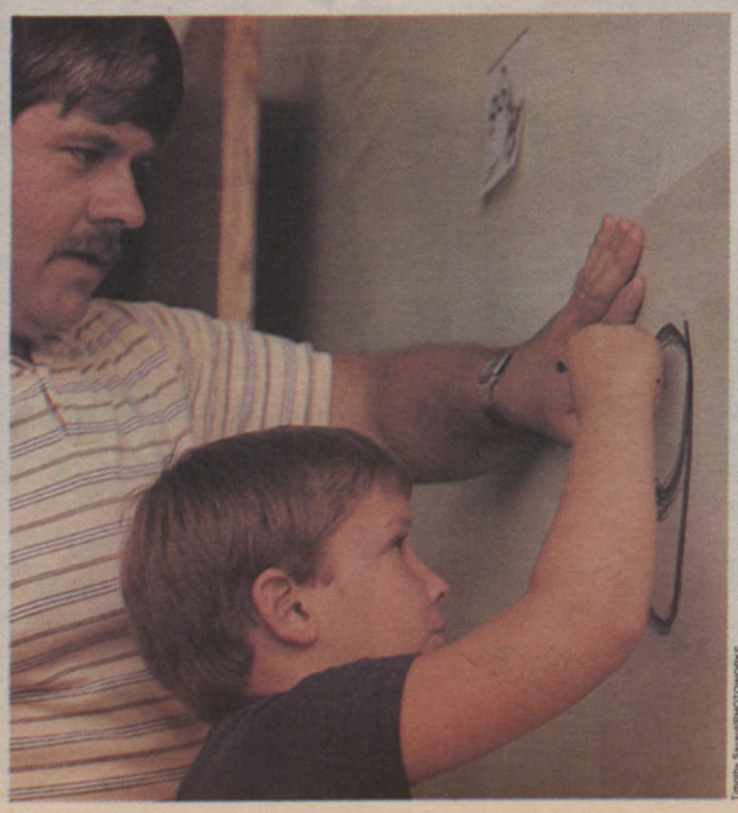
The Orton Dyslexia Society
724 York Rd.
Baltimore, Md. 21204
(301) 296-0232

The Slingerland Institute
1 Bellevue Center
411 108th Ave. N.E.
Bellevue, Washington 98004
(206) 453-1190

Association for Children with Learning Disabilities
4156 Library Road
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15234
(412) 881-2253

Council for Exceptional Children
1920 Association Drive
Reston, Va. 22091
(703) 620-3660

Classroom Success for the Learning Disabled. Suzanne H. Stevens. John F. Blair, publisher (1406 Plaza Dr., Winston-Salem, NC 27103). $8.95 paperback (314 pp.). A 1984 book full of practical ideas for the mainstream teacher interested in helping the learning-disabled student.



Timothy Savard/PHOTOWORKS

Joe Di Dio

(Left) Geraldine Tetreault, director of the Slingerland Summer School in Berlin, N.H., attacks students' "word blindness" through exercises using sight, hearing, and touch.

(Center) Berlin (N.H.) High School science instructor Steve Michaud helps Eric Demers get a feel for his ABC's as part of the summer school's emphasis on multisensory instruction.

(Right) Victory! University of Hawaii student Andy Geiser crosses the finish line at the U.S. Capitol after pedaling 3,700 miles across America. His goal during his 10-state ride: to bring national attention to dyslexia, a condition he himself has managed to overcome.

People

John Gram

Kindergartners at Grimes Elementary School in Burlington, Iowa, get a real head start on their school careers, thanks to a program introduced by Association member **Chris Desy**, past president of the Burlington Education Association, four years ago.

For Desy's students—and now for kindergartners throughout the city—activities like coloring, fingerpainting, and listening to stories are all part of a program carefully designed to prevent school failure.

This nationally validated program, which Desy learned about when she was invited to observe it in the Peotone, Ill., school district, starts the spring *before* children enter kindergarten. They're tested for skills in five areas—visual, auditory, language, fine motor, and gross motor—at a district "roundup." If they're found to be below average in any area, they can attend summer school.

Throughout the regular school year, for 45 minutes twice a week, small groups of Desy's kindergartners work with her and parent volunteers to master specific skills in each of the five areas.

"I have so many parent volunteers," Desy says, "I have to rotate them."

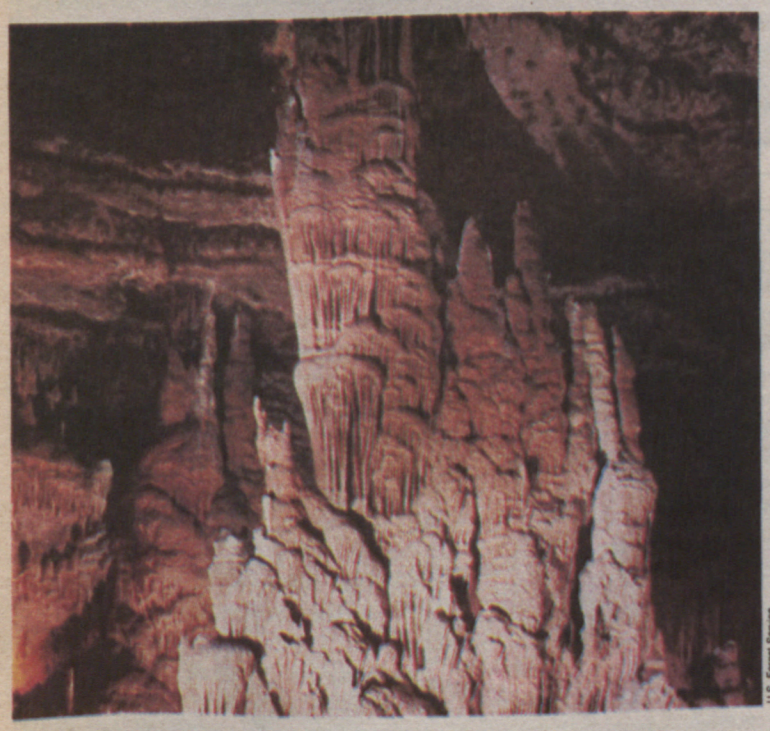
The attention to getting every kindergartner off to a good start has had phenomenal results, Desy reports. It's not unusual for children to make more than a year's gain in skills in just eight months.

Andrew Rafkind

Concord (N.H.) High School is filled with pride—and more than a touch of wonder. Last year **Christa McAuliffe** (*above*) was a social studies teacher there. Today she's a celebrity—chosen to be the first private citizen passenger on the space shuttle.

As America's 'teachernaut'—selected by NASA from more than 10,000 applicants—McAuliffe plans to teach three lessons live (via video) during her February 1986 flight.

"I feel strongly that ordinary people are part of history," she



U.S. Forest Service

To get to his summer job, Arkansas's **Bob Rahrle** could fall down a rabbit hole, but he takes the elevator instead. It deposits him 216 feet below ground, in the Cathedral Room of Blanchard Springs Caverns.

There he begins one of two underground tours he gives visitors, showing the would-be spelunkers an extensive range of cave formations, including draperies, flowstones, and rimstones.

Rahrle's been a tour guide at Blanchard Springs, which is managed by the U.S. Forest Service, for eight summers. In the above-ground portion of his life, he's an Association activist who teaches math and a gifted and talented class at the Brookland Public School near Jonesboro.

Chris Ritter

says. "I want students to make that connection—to see themselves as part of the space age. If a teacher can come back from a shuttle flight with personal experiences and a new perspective on space travel, then students are going to say, 'I'm a part of history too.'"

An Association activist since the start of her teaching career in 1970, McAuliffe is past president of the Bow (N.H.) Education Association. "I've always been a real advocate for teachers," she adds, "and always felt that teachers need a good strong organization." She expects the publicity about her trip to have a positive impact on the profession.

The backup for the teacher in space will be Association member **Barbara Morgan** (*far left*), a second grade teacher in McCall, Idaho. Morgan is training with McAuliffe—and will share her flight from Mission Control in Houston.

An 11-year teaching veteran, Morgan reports her interest in the space program dates back to her childhood. "When the first chimpanzee was launched," she says, "I remember thinking it should have been a child—like me—instead."

"I'm feeling incredibly lucky," Morgan adds, "combining the best job in the world—teaching—with the second best—astronaut. Kids always want to be astronauts—with Christa's flight, I hope they'll want to be teachers as well."

Allan M. Sicks

Thanks to the willingness of school newspaper adviser **Judy Worth** to stand up for press freedom, student journalists at Campbell County High School in Gillette, Wyo., now operate under a school board policy that limits the right of administrators to censor their paper.

The board adopted the policy this summer as part of an out-of-court settlement of a lawsuit brought by Worth. The new policy defines libel (and obscenity) and allows administrators to exercise prior restraint—i.e., pull a story—only if they have probable cause to think it libelous or obscene.

Two years ago the high school principal had refused to allow the student paper to reprint a nationally syndicated cartoon poking fun at the Moral Majority. The principal felt the cartoon was "unduly critical of the conservative viewpoint."

"After I got in touch with the Student Press Law Center to see if the kids' rights had been abridged," Worth explains, "the principal suddenly found—without any observations—that I needed to improve in six areas.

"Then," she continues, "I lost sponsorship of the newspaper and the yearbook—both paid jobs. The Wyoming Education Association and NEA took my case to federal court."

The out-of-court settlement gave Worth an unprecedented $51,000 in damages and a new evaluation stating that her teaching meets district expectations, but it hasn't given her her publications jobs back—yet.

Tom LaBarbera

It simply wasn't done. Men didn't teach home economics in the 1950s. So when **George Lindrum** began applying for teaching jobs, he encountered disbelief—and a real reluctance to hire him.

But Lindrum was determined—and he's now in his 29th year of teaching home ec in the Los Angeles schools.

"I think I was the first man in the country to be certified in home economics," he says, "and I used to get some very peculiar looks."

Times have changed. Last school year Lindrum was honored as California's Outstanding Home Economics Teacher of the Year and as one of two merit winners in the National Home Economics Teacher of the Year program.

Lindrum's specialty is cooking. Enrollment in his hotel/restaurant occupations program at Belmont High School—a pilot project in Los Angeles when he started it in the 1960s—is often two-to-one male.

"I think my being a man has given a lot of boys permission to be interested in home ec—or whatever else appeals to them," Lindrum suggests.

On his summer vacation, Blackwell, Okla., math and computer science teacher **Wes Learned** does what summer vacation was originally designed for: he works on a farm—actually on several. He's a custom cutter of the winter wheat harvested in the Midwest from June to August.

Learned starts cutting on his own farm in Billings, Okla., in June. Then he and a son move their equipment—combine, grain-bed trucks with trailers, pickup truck—into western Nebraska.

"It's a race against time," Learned explains. "Will I get to the wheat before it rains? Will I finish cutting before school opens in mid-August?"

Last year, he drove for two days without sleep from Scottsbluff, Nebr., to make it back to opening day at Blackwell High School; this year he got home by 8 p.m. the night before.

Learned, seen here checking the moisture in a field of Nebraska wheat, is immediate past president of his 80-member local association, the Blackwell Teachers Organization.

Carolyn Salisbury

'The Ribbon': some 25,000 colorful cloth panels tied together into a 15-mile-long banner encircling the Pentagon, the Capitol, and the Lincoln Memorial. On an August Sunday in Washington, the 40th anniversary of the first use of nuclear warfare, the ribbon served as a gentle but powerful statement of a nation's yearning for peace.

Hundreds of delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly, meeting in Washington in July, had caught the spirit of the ribbon project, filling 25 muslin panels with names and drawings of loved ones, picnics, rainbows—whatever they personally could not bear to lose in a nuclear war.

Helping to carry this NEA segment of the ribbon and link it with those from every corner of America were Association members (*standing, from left*) **Cheryl Ellingson** of Holding Ford, Minn.; **Deborah Maher** of Martha's Vineyard, Mass.; **Chuck Reinhardt** of Pine Bush, N.Y.; **Karen Adams** of Ithaca, N.Y.; and (*foreground*) **Madeleine Urban** of Fort Lee, N.J.

RESOURCES

Free or Inexpensive

LANGUAGE ARTS

Tapping Potential: English and Language Arts for the Black Learner. Charlotte K. Brooks and others, editors. Members of the Black Caucus of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) present some 40 essays (divided into sections on language and dialect, reading, writing, and literature) about effective teaching approaches for Black students in school and college. 330 pp. Stock No. 50101-312. NCTE and NEA members, $10; nonmembers, $13. NCTE, 1111 Kenyon Rd., Urbana, IL 61801.

GUIDANCE

Off To College: The Survival Manual for High School Students and Their Parents. Melody Martin. Zeroes in on the steps high school seniors need to take to make their own decisions about college. 130 pp. Monarch Press, $7.95 at bookstores, or by credit card charge from Monarch Press at 800/223-2336.

POLITICAL ACTION

Campaign Solutions: Computer Applications for Political Campaigns, An Instructional Guide. Stephen Ross. Describes a series of 14 workshops for teaching how to adapt business software (specifically PFS and Appleworks) to the information needs of a political campaign. Developed by a Colorado Education Association member active in pro-education politics. 41 pp. $7 postpaid. Challenger Instructional Technology, 5582 Pennsylvania Ave., Boulder, CO 80303.

DECISION-MAKING

Decision-Making Skills for Middle School Students. Sherrel Bergmann and Gerald J. Rudman. Part of the Reference and Resource Series. Presents curriculum and instructional strategies for middle school teachers and counselors whose students are learning problem-solving and decision-making skills in personal behavior. Stock No. 1528-2-10-D. $7.95. NEA Professional Library, P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06516 (or order via the postage-paid reply form on page 129 of the 1985-86 *Today's Education* magazine).

ETHNIC STUDIES/ART

Indian Images 1986. Calendar featuring color reproductions of paintings by contemporary American Indian artists. $5.95 (special NEA member price) plus $1 for shipping. Indian Image Productions, P.O. Box 3621, Evansville, IN 47735.

SPACE EXPLORATION

Space Shuttle Wallsheet. Follow teachernaut Christa McAuliffe with NASA's poster showing a cutaway view of the space shuttle's interior. 30″ x 42″. Stock no. 033-000-00743-4. $3.50. Charge to VISA/MasterCard (give account number and expiration date) or write check to Superintendent of Documents, Dept. 36-PC, Washington, DC 20402.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Spanish Names: Their Pronunciation. Written (phonetic) guide to pronunciation of more than 500 Spanish first names and surnames, accompanied by oral pronunciation on audiotape. Designed for non-Spanish-speaking teachers who have Hispanic students. Booklet (37 pp.) and cassette, $9.89 postpaid. Fiesta Unlimited, Inc., P.O. Box 518, Athena, OR 97813.

ENERGY AWARENESS

Educational packages for various grades giving overview of solar, biomass, geothermal, and other forms of energy, plus poster on Energy Awareness Week (October 20-26, 1985). Single or bulk copies free. Conservation and Renewable Energy Inquiry and Referral Service, P.O. Box 8900, Silver Spring, MD 20907, or call the following 800 numbers: Pennsylvania, 462-4983; Alaska and Hawaii, 523-4700; rest of the U.S., 523-2929.

ART

Health Hazards in Arts & Crafts. Poster listing health and safety risks associated with the arts and crafts. Suggests precautions, safe substitutes, and products to be avoided. $2.75. Center for Occupational Hazards, 5 Beekman St., New York, NY 10038.

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YOU AND YOUR RETIREMENT

Keeping Social Security Secure

This past August marked the golden anniversary of one of the century's major legislative accomplishments: passage of the Social Security Act.

Back in 1935, newspapers carried cartoons about those confusing new nine-digit Social Security numbers—numbers that threatened to become more important than people's names.

Social Security—FDR's national insurance program for the elderly, unemployed, disabled, widows, and orphans—was considered radical. No longer. Americans have come to depend on it—to bet their futures on it.

And that bet looks much less risky now than it did in midsummer, when Congress deadlocked for weeks over the question of freezing Social Security benefits.

The lawmakers finally put their stamp of approval on a fiscal 1986 spending blueprint that preserves this year's scheduled cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs).

But the budget resolution wasn't passed without some political casualties—most noticeably, the cozy relationship between President Reagan and his most ardent Republican supporters in the Senate.

The budget debate began with the President reneging on his 1984 campaign promise to protect Social Security and agreeing to a Senate GOP plan to ease the $200 billion annual deficit by freezing Social Security benefits for a year. But as a bipartisan majority in the House of Representatives rejected every attempt to pass such a freeze, the President did an about-face and removed the idea from the House-Senate conference committee's negotiations on a final version of the budget.

NEA-Retired members played a major role in helping the House remain steadfast in its commitment to protect Social Security COLAs.

"Our members were busy writing letters and visiting members of Congress and their back-home staffs," says NEA-Retired President Joe Westbrook of Memphis, Tenn.

New 22-cent U.S. postage stamp salutes Social Security's 50th anniversary.

"We can only hope the President and the Senate have learned their lesson: it's not wise to break a 50-year social contract with the American voter."

The summer's successful fight to protect Social Security COLAs is just the latest battle in a five-year "reign of terror," NEA-R's Westbrook points out.

The first assault on Social Security came with President Reagan's move into the White House in 1981, when he hired a consultant on Social Security: Peter Ferrara, long a proponent of dismantling the system and turning it into a welfare program with the insurance functions being given to the private sector.

Then came budget chief David Stockman's proposal to cut $40 billion in benefits—a proposal the Senate rejected 96-0.

The cruelest episode involved the Administration's attempts to remove thousands of disabled and mentally ill Americans from the Social Security rolls. Two-thirds of those who appealed these "administrative removals" had their benefits restored.

Does the latest battle over COLAs and the President's seeming retreat signal an end to the attacks on Social Security?

"Consider what happens 10 to 15 years from now," says Henry Aaron of the Brookings Institution, a Washington think tank. "The baby boom generation is approaching retirement age. They're the bulk of the voting population. It's inconceivable that Social Security will suffer any kind of severe political damage—particularly in light of what's happened when it was in a far more vulnerable situation, in the early 1980s."

Not everyone shares Aaron's confidence.

"It would be wonderful to believe the attacks are over," says Joe Westbrook. "But we've seen little indication yet that the present Administration understands the need for a sound system of Social Security."

Of particular concern is the fear that Congress will be asked to mandate universal Social Security for all public school employees. NEA continues to fight such a move.

One ray of hope: in the year 1992, Social Security funding will no longer be considered as part of the overall federal budget process. That will at least remove "solving the deficit problem" as an excuse for tampering with the program.

But the continuing battles over Social Security have raised doubts about the program's soundness in the minds of younger Americans.

Not to worry, says Aaron of the Brookings Institution.

"In another year and a half the Social Security system is going to begin accumulating reserves (by collecting more in revenues than it's paying out in benefits) at a truly impressive rate—on the order of $30 million a year and climbing."

Vigilance is the key. "As long as there's an NEA," pledges NEA-R President Westbrook, "there's going to be a tough fight on the hands of anyone who tries to destroy Social Security."

—Eddy Gattis

Building the Education Family

Elected delegates to the 1985 NEA Representative Assembly took an important step this summer toward ensuring an effective national voice for retired school employees.

They voted to amend the NEA bylaws to set the stage for unification of NEA-Retired (NEA-R) members and those retired school employees who currently belong only to state Associations.

Under the bylaw changes, an NEA-R member who retired in a state where the NEA affiliate offers membership to retirees and provides governance participation for them must unify his or her membership with that state Association effective September 1986. And beginning with the 1986-87 membership year, new members of retired membership programs in state Associations that provide governance participation for retirees must become unified members of NEA-R.

Currently, 19 states have a retired membership program that provides governance participation. And 13 of those states have already taken steps to unify state and national membership.

"Unification at all levels is the ideal framework to boost retired school employees' resources and clout," says NEA-R President Joe Westbrook. "This is a critical step in making sure every retired school employee can fully participate in the programs and services of every level of the Association."

—E.G.

YOU AND THE LAW

Preserving Jefferson's Wall

Thomas Jefferson never for a moment hedged. He repeatedly insisted that the First Amendment clause prohibiting Congress from enacting any law "respecting an establishment of religion" was intended to erect "a wall of separation between Church and State."

Jefferson, of course, never enjoyed the benefit of Robert Frost's company—and so had no one to remind him that "something there is that does not love a wall."

That "something," many believed, would prove to be today's U.S. Supreme Court. The Court that in recent years has retreated from the progressive legacy of Chief Justice Earl Warren. The Court that ruled during its 1983-84 session that a local government could use public funds to erect a nativity scene.

But in a series of decisions this past July, the Supreme Court fired forth a simple and reassuring message: Jefferson's wall still stands.

The Court's latest rulings amount to a strong reaffirmation of the constitutionally mandated separation of church and state. Most notably, by a 6-3 margin in *Wallace v. Jaffree*, the Court struck down an Alabama law authorizing a period of silence at the beginning of each school day for "meditation or voluntary prayer."

The high court concluded that the Alabama state legislature enacted the law "for the sole purpose of expressing the state's endorsement of prayer activities." This official endorsement, wrote Justice John Paul Stevens, violates the principle that government must pursue a course of complete neutrality toward religion.

The logical linchpins underlying the high court's decision leave little doubt that legislative *intent* will figure prominently in determining the constitutionality of the moment-of-silence statutes now on the books in some 25 other states.

The ruling in *Wallace v. Jaffree*, observes NEA General Counsel Robert Chanin, is "keyed heavily to the specific circumstances surrounding the enactment of the Alabama statute. The possibility that some moment-of-silence statutes may pass constitutional muster is implicit in the Court's opinion and is made explicit in the concurring opinions."

Adds attorney Charles Sims, an American Civil Liberties Union expert on church/state issues, "The Court said what had to be said—that if a law only permits a moment of silence and is not covertly trying to push prayer, it's OK."

In two other state/religion cases, decided concurrently, the Court ruled that assigning public school teachers to provide remedial instruction to students in parochial schools results in an excessive and thereby unconstitutional entanglement of government with religion. In *Aguilar v. Felton* and *Grand Rapids v. Ball*, the 5-4 majority opinions displayed unswerving commitment to the principle that public monies must not support sectarian missions.

Justice William Brennan, writing for the majority, concluded in the Grand Rapids case that the presence of public school teachers in parochial schools represents "a crucial symbolic link between government and religion" that the Constitution will not allow.

The Court's holdings in both *Aguilar* and *Grand Rapids* were entirely in accord with positions expressed in NEA friend-of-the-court briefs.

This summer's rulings owe much to the principle that the Court expounded when, in 1962, it first declared that the government "should stay out of the business of. . .sanctioning official prayers" and leave that function where it belongs—*with the people themselves.*

This principle appears neither sacrilegious nor antireligious nor subversive. Nonetheless, the Burger Court now finds itself under assault from right-wing quarters. The acidic rhetoric implies that the robed authorities have departed from tradition and charted new judicial territory.

That's a strange charge: the theme that runs consistently through the high court's latest rulings on church/state relations is borrowed from an old tune—*McCollum v. Board of Education* (1948). The melody is Jeffersonian: "The First Amendment rests upon the premise that both religion and government can best work to achieve their lofty aims if each is left free from the other. . . ."

Amen.

—Carl Luty

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Tired of buzzwords? Learn what causes human behavior in specific day-to-day language you can make use of.

■ How to Humanize the Motivation Process

Tired of inhumane approaches to teaching that turn your classroom into a laboratory? *Motivation and Teaching* is a people-oriented approach that recognizes real world situations.

■ When Perceptions and Judgements Influence Actions—

Are you facing boredom or resentment in your classes? Learn how to tell the difference and how to build positive learning enthusiasm.

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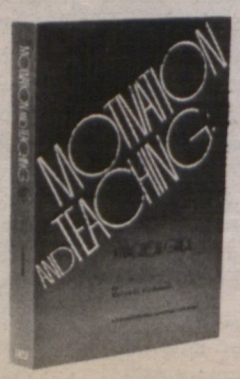

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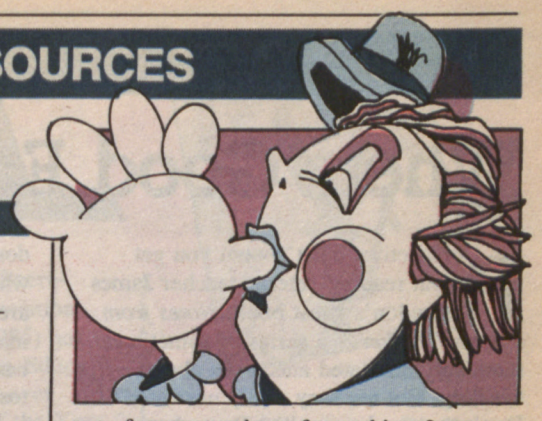
RESOURCES

Idea Exchange



How Many Is a Million?

To give students a more concrete understanding of large numbers, Kaye Green set an unusual goal for her combined class of third and fourth graders at Miller's Run School in Sheffield, Vt.: to collect exactly one million kernels of popcorn.

Each Friday the class popped a batch and spent a half hour counting and bagging it. "Eating a moderate amount was allowed," Green laughs, "but it had to come from the uncounted stock."

Kids soon learned to speed up the process by counting by twos, threes, and fours (a useful math drill). Each week they tallied their new grand total and calculated the number of kernels left to go.

The classroom was just about full—with all available floor space taken and bags of popcorn hanging from the ceiling—when the one million mark was finally reached, one Wednesday in May. The class celebrated with a sundae party.

The students weren't the only ones who didn't have a realistic concept of how many a million is, Green adds. Two farmers who came to haul away the stale popcorn for their livestock showed up with just a compact car and a utility trailer. They made two trips, leaving the rest—an entire pickup truck load—for the school cook to haul away.

For Class Clowns, It's Showtime!

How do you deal with the class clown?

Altricia Misse, a first grade teacher at George Nettels School in Pittsburg, Kansas, has a suggestion: give the aspiring entertainers in your classroom a regular forum. She sets aside about 15 minutes every Friday for "funny time."

"I decided it was a shame to have to get after my students for making funny faces or remarks during class," she says. "I didn't want them to get the impression that I didn't like to laugh or have fun, but I needed to teach, too."

During "funny time" each student gets a minute to make the class laugh by making faces, telling jokes or riddles, or performing skits. Ethnic jokes and inappropriate language aren't allowed, but just about anything else goes.

The weekly event has helped unearth creative talents and leadership skills, with some students organizing real productions and giving up recess time to rehearse their acts.

"It's also very convenient when someone wants to cut up in class," Misse reports. "You can just say, 'Save it for funny time on Friday. That would be a good one.'"

Food for Thought

Joan Mary Macey, an elementary art teacher at Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson Schools in Binghamton, N.Y., has developed a palate-pleasing project to hone students' art skills.

She asks the children to ask whoever does the most cooking at their house to contribute two recipes for a class cookbook. Macey eliminates the inevitable duplicates and then reproduces the recipe collection for every child, with appropriate attributions to moms and dads.

Each student makes a decorative cover out of heavy paper and staples the recipes into it. The resulting booklet makes a welcome gift for parents.

TV/Radio Tips

NEA recommends the following broadcasts to members, students, and their families:

Back to School Animation Festival—*HBO, late September; check local listings for dates and times.* Half-hour animated adaptations of popular children's books.

Kids' America—*American Public Radio, weekdays beginning late September; check local listings for dates and times.* Three-hour daily program reinforces positive learning attitudes in 6- to 12-year-olds.

Too Smart for Strangers—*Disney (cable) Channel, late September; check local listings for dates and times.* Hour-long show about child abuse, including a cartoon narrated by Winnie the Pooh and a panel discussion for parents.

A Walk Through the 20th Century—*PBS, Wednesdays, 8-9:30 p.m. ET.* Rerun of award-winning 19-part series of documentaries. For free teachers' guides write to Chevron, 595 Market St., San Francisco, CA 94105.

American Treasury—*CBS-TV, beginning Monday, September 30, each weekday at 3:58 p.m. ET.* One-minute informal broadcasts featuring little-known facts about people, places, and events in real life and fiction.

Main Street—*NBC-TV, first Tuesday of every month starting October 1, 4-5 p.m. ET.* News magazine format designed for young people, including live interviews with entertainers.

Jane Eyre—*Arts and Entertainment (cable) Network beginning Tuesday, October 1; check local listings for time.* Five-part series based on the classic by Charlotte Bronte. For free study guides write to Carolyn Reynolds, A&E Network, 555 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10017.

Cry of the Condor—*Discovery (cable) Channel, Thursday, October 3, 9:30-10 p.m. ET.* A look at environmentalists' efforts to preserve an endangered species.

ABC Afterschool Specials—*ABC-TV, Wednesdays, 4-5 p.m. ET. October 9:* "Cindy Eller: A Modern Fairy Tale." *October 23:* "One Too Many" (a story about teenage drinking and its tragic results). For free study guides write to your local ABC station or to ABC Community Relations, 1330 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10019.

The Last Place on Earth—*PBS, starting Sunday, October 20, 9-10 p.m. ET.* Six-part dramatization of Scott Amundsen's race to the South Pole.

BOOK BEAT

When 'Good Enough' Is Good Enough

Perspective. That's what you get from reading veteran teacher James Herndon's latest book. *Notes from a Schoolteacher* is a series of sometimes seemingly unrelated anecdotes about teaching. But are they really unrelated? Don't they make a point? Or perhaps several points? Read on.

We've all been down this road called education reform before, Herndon observes. He wrote *The Way It Spozed To Be* back in the '60s, during the previous wave of concern about the schools. But has anything important really changed?

Oh, there've been new names, new programs—"plans," Herndon calls them—but did anything actually change for the classroom teacher?

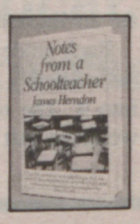
One set of reformers called for tighter discipline, another for more student freedom; one for more basics, another for more electives; one for tight grading, another for social promotion. "No matter which way the pendulum was said to swing," Herndon observes, "toward which pole, there was never any change. One reason is that no schools really ever changed in the slightest. *Whatever* it was, no one did it anyway." In reality, the pendulum never swung.

Well, maybe this time it will. In this latest crisis in our schools, the media tell us teachers are at fault. But wasn't it always our fault? "Incompetent teachers?" asks Herndon. "When haven't we been? Or, incompetent at what? There is no such thing as teaching school competently."

NOTES FROM A SCHOOLTEACHER

by James Herndon

(Simon & Schuster. 169 pp. $15.95.)



This is not, however, an admission of defeat. The truth is that "if you wanted to think up the worst possible situation in which to 'learn' things...you would...get ...some thirty twelve-year-olds and put them in a room together, just as in fact American public schools do now and have done forever and will go on doing."

The result, though far from perfect, is "good enough," Herndon thinks. Referring to the suburban San Francisco junior high where he teaches language and social studies, he explains: "No household...has got these books, these art materials, these basketballs, these grassy fields, these computers...."

"We have this stuff," he tells students (and would-be reformers), "and we, the teachers, know about it and you can learn about all this and plenty else, right here."

Reformers, however, don't believe in "good enough." They come up with more plans, alleged panaceas—such as merit pay to reward outstanding teachers. Herndon's reaction to this idea: "I'd agree to pay some teachers more money on merit, if we could just decide the issue by lottery, or matching pennies, two out of three, and change every year."

Since there aren't any formulas for determining outstanding teachers, Herndon feels compelled to explain—to those who think they know exactly what schools are—just what a school is. He gives many examples, among them a school for baseball and one for fishing, and then tosses out this general definition:

"A school is a thing where your kid will be taught something which you could, of course, teach him yourself, if need be, but which you would rather someone else did it. That's it about schools. What they are for."

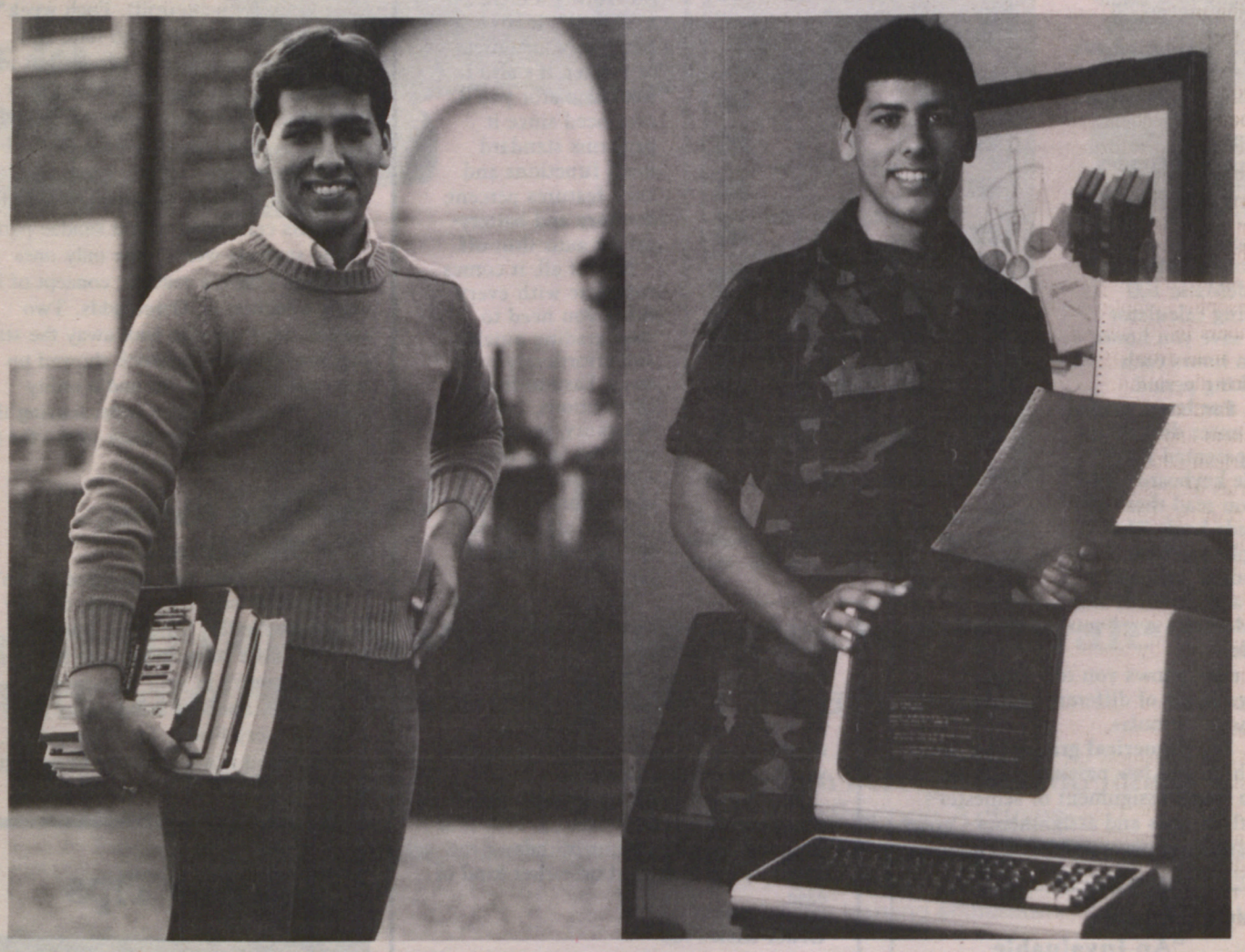
And schools are people. Some of those people are called teachers, and they are constantly making decisions, trusting their instincts—flying by the seat of their pants, their craft not amenable to definition by formula.

There's a chapter on collective bargaining that's a gem—perhaps itself worth the price of the book. It will especially hit home if you've ever been at the table (especially across from a school board's hired negotiator), or been an Association leader, or given a damn and tried to bring about change or prevent loss.

Read this book. Will it fill you with despair that there will be no change in our schools? Perhaps. Will it make you feel we're doing a good job now? Perhaps. Will it give you insights into teaching and learning and schools? Perhaps.

Will you enjoy it? Absolutely.

Reviewed by Dean S. Winslow, social studies teacher at Moon Valley High School and president of the Glendale Union High School District Classroom Teachers Association, Phoenix, Ariz.



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Your NEA

REACHING OUT

Today's Education: Focus on Reform

It's a keeper. The new issue of *Today's Education*—mailed to NEA members in August—is designed to stay on your bookshelf for quick and ready reference throughout the school year.

The 1985-86 edition opens with an 18-page section on NEA's nine principles—a set of guiding precepts developed by a task force of NEA members over a two-year period. In this section 27 classroom teachers, Association leaders, politicians, and education reformers suggest strategies that can translate reform ideas into positive classroom realities.

The new *Today's Education* also spotlights the methods and philosophies employed by NEA members in 19 subject or discipline areas from 19 schools around the nation.

A third section looks at the numbers and trends that define American education. Next comes a series of lesson plans offered by 16 of the 1985 state Teachers of the Year, followed by a special NEA Professional Library mini-catalog featuring a host of professional development materials designed by teachers for teachers.

Rounding out the 166-page issue: full text of all the resolutions, new business items, and legislative priorities adopted by delegates to the 1985 NEA Representative Assembly.

Education support personnel will receive a special edition of *Today's Education* later this fall.

Fulbright Exchange Program: Last Call

If you're an elementary or secondary teacher interested in applying for the 1986-87 Fulbright International Teacher Exchange Program, you have only until October 15 to do so.

In addition to year-long exchanges of teaching positions, short-term summer seminars are available in France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and Canada. For more information, contact the Fulbright Teacher Exchange Program, E/ASX, United States Information Agency, 301 Fourth St., S.W., Washington, DC 20547 (202/485-2555).

Life Members Write Now

The 1985 *Proceedings of the Representative Assembly* will be mailed in January to any NEA life member who wants a copy.

To get the *Proceedings*, simply clip your mailing label from the front of this newspaper and send it with your request to NEA Membership Records, 1201 Sixteenth St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036 no later than December 1.

NEA's TV Messages Salute Excellence

During the back-to-school period now drawing to a close, Americans watching TV news or public affairs programs have seen three NEA messages dramatizing the excellence of the nation's public schools.

The 30-second spots showcase three NEA members—John Ingle, Leticia Ponce, and Sarina Grant—and their contributions to education.

NEA spent $1.3 million for the spots to run on the NBC, ABC, and Cable News networks; state affiliates bought an additional $250,000 worth of airtime on individual stations.

DUES-TAB: New Insurance Coverage

Watch your mailbox for an information package on DUES-TAB—a valuable new insurance benefit available at no cost to eligible NEA members. (Details on this unique concept in member protection also appear on page 20.)

The DUES-TAB package you'll be receiving includes a certification form. Simply complete and return it in order to activate your coverage.

Plan Now To Attend

NEA will hold a series of three national conferences this year reflecting the nine principles for educational excellence established by the Association's blue-ribbon task force.

The conferences, under the general theme "Ensuring Equity and Excellence in America's Schools," replace the bargaining, human and civil rights, and instructional conferences that used to be held separately.

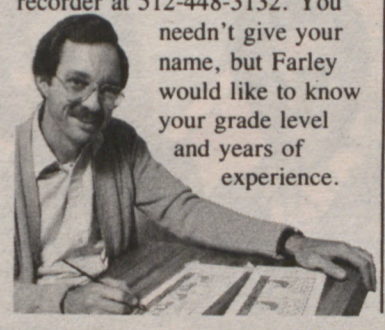
The first conference, "The Mission of the Public Schools," will take place the weekend of October 25-27 at the New Orleans (La.) Hilton Hotel. Focus will be on public policy and the changing role of public education—past, present, and future—in our society. For information on registering, phone 202/822-7700.

Future conferences will examine "Better Education Through Decentralized Decision-Making," March 14-16 in Seattle, and "Delivery of Quality Education by a Competent Workforce," April 11-13 in Atlanta.

LOOKING BACK

► **Joe Farley of Austin, Texas,** whose cartoons grace the *NEA Today* "Letters" page, has left teaching to begin publishing his own monthly newsletter— a four-pager in which teachers candidly express their feelings on educational issues and classroom life. For a one-year subscription, send $12 to *Inside Teaching: The Newsletter,* P.O. Box 18462, Austin, TX 78760.

To register your comments for possible publication in the newsletter, write to the same address or phone a 24-hour message recorder at 512-448-3132. You needn't give your name, but Farley would like to know your grade level and years of experience.

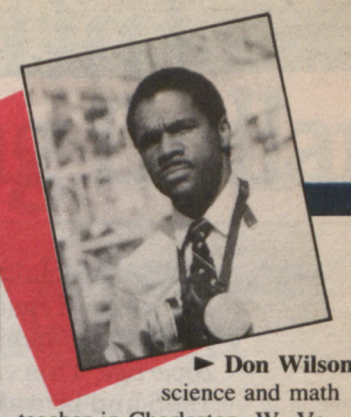


► **Nancy Gropper** ("Secretary...Innovator...Association Activist," Jan./Feb. 1985) has become the Washington Education Association's first-ever "Classified Member of the Year."

Gropper, secretary to the director of instructional materials for the Seattle area's Northshore school district, was honored at the 1985 WEA Representative Assembly after being selected by a vote of the WEA executive

committee for classified employees. The award recognizes her employment record, school and community activities, and local and state Association leadership.

In 1982 Gropper served as first president of the 3,000-member WEA Classified Public Employees Association.



► **Don Wilson,** science and math teacher in Charleston, W. Va., and co-treasurer of People Concerned About MIC ("People," June 1985), reports attendance is swelling at his local group's open meetings in the wake of a recent wave of chemical leaks.

"People are beginning to realize that chemical nightmares aren't limited to residents of any one community," he explains. "We're attracting people from out of state."

Although Wilson's organization is dedicated to permanently stopping Union Carbide production of methyl isocyanate (MIC)—the deadly pesticide that killed more than 2,500 people in Bhopal, India, last December—it's also concerned about citizen exposure to *any* toxic chemical. In August, two separate Union Carbide leaks engulfed South Charleston and Institute in toxic fumes.

TAKING A STAND

NEA Directors Go on Record

Under a policy set by the NEA Board of Directors in 1975, NEA must publish all roll-call votes of the Board. There were two such votes at the meeting held June 27 and June 29.

Subjects of Votes:

#1: Authorized a contribution of $5,000 from contingency funds to the Pennsylvania State Education Association (PSEA) Tornado Fund. 113 yes, 5 no, 1 vacancy, 10 nonrespondents, 5 absent (4 other absentees replaced by alternates).

#2: Approved the proposed NEA program budget for fiscal year 1985-86 as printed and recommended its adoption by the Representative Assembly. 125 yes, 0 no, 1 vacancy, 3 nonrespondents, 6 absent (5 other absentees replaced by alternates).

KEY:
Y—voted in favor of the issue
N—voted in opposition to the issue
NR—vote not recorded on the issue
O—absent from meeting
V—vacancy
*—alternate director
**—submitted statement of position

NAME	STATE	Roll Call # 1	2
Harris	Ala.	Y	Y
McDanal	Ala.	O	O
McDonald	Ala.	Y	Y
Stitham	Alaska	Y	Y
**Beachem	Ariz.	NR	Y
Federoff	Ariz.	Y	Y
**Johnson	Ark.	Y	NR
Brooks	Calif.	O	O
Gooden	Calif.	NR	Y
Harper	Calif.	NR	Y
Johnson	Calif.	Y	Y
*Pavey	Calif.	Y	Y
Reising	Calif.	Y	Y
Vick	Calif.	NR	Y
Walden	Calif.	Y	Y
Williams	Calif.	Y	Y
Wittman	Calif.	Y	Y
**Morris	Colo.	Y	NR
Wright	Colo.	Y	Y
Chapin	Conn.	Y	Y
**Gagliardi	Conn.	NR	Y
Smith	Del.	Y	Y
Zachariah	D.C.	Y	Y
Gordon	Fla.	Y	Y
Scott	Fla.	Y	Y
Aikens	Ga.	Y	Y
Eller	Ga.	Y	Y
Lum	Hawaii	Y	Y
Hovey	Idaho	Y	Y
Johan	Ill.	Y	Y
Price	Ill.	N	Y
Smith	Ill.	Y	Y
Smith	Ill.	Y	Y
Miller	Ind.	Y	Y
Moudy	Ind.	Y	Y
**Gilchrist	Iowa	NR	Y
**Mesicek	Iowa	NR	Y
Cole	Kansas	Y	Y
Gunter	Kansas	Y	Y
Harvey	Ky.	Y	Y
Morton	Ky.	Y	Y
Falcon	La.	N	Y
Green	La.	Y	Y
McGary	Maine	NR	Y
Doyle	Md.	Y	Y
Kuker-Kihl	Md.	Y	Y
LaPlante	Mass.	N	Y
Matulaitis	Mass.	Y	Y
Todd	Mass.	Y	Y
Brown	Mich.	Y	Y
*Christian	Mich.	Y	Y
Chunovich	Mich.	O	O
Davenport	Mich.	Y	Y
Swanson	Mich.	Y	Y
Zook	Mich.	Y	Y
Thomas	Minn.	Y	Y
Tigner	Minn.	Y	Y
Armstrong	Miss.	Y	Y
Jung	Mo.	Y	Y
Berg	Mont.	N	Y
Rea	Nebr.	Y	Y
Anderson	Nev.	N	Y
Mitchell	N.H.	Y	Y
Goldman	N.J.	Y	Y
Johnson	N.J.	Y	Y
Moore	N.J.	Y	Y
Peters	N.J.	Y	Y
Walters	N.J.	Y	Y
Eachus	N. Mex.	Y	Y
Anderson	N.Y.	Y	O
Cleveland	N.Y.	Y	Y
*Ruth	N.Y.	—	Y
**Cummings	N. C.	NR	Y
Graves	N. C.	Y	Y
Rader	N. C.	Y	Y
Gallagher	N. Dak.	Y	Y
Augusta	Ohio	Y	Y
Dorsey	Ohio	Y	Y
Jones	Ohio	Y	Y
VanGundy	Ohio	Y	Y
Wilson	Ohio	Y	Y
Black	Okla.	Y	Y
Jewell	Okla.	Y	Y
Cornell	Oreg.	Y	Y
Lee	Oreg.	Y	Y
Bentz	OV	Y	Y
Epting	Pa.	Y	Y
**Halas	Pa.	Y	NR
Huntley	Pa.	Y	Y
Mechlowitz	Pa.	Y	Y
Mitchell	Pa.	O	Y
*Noonan	Pa.	Y	—
del Valle	P.R.	O	O
*Lebron	P.R.	Y	Y
Vacancy	P.R.	V	V
Blanda	R.I.	Y	Y
Kanapaux	S. C.	Y	Y
Dangel	S. Dak.	Y	Y
Akers	Tenn.	NR	Y
Cage	Tenn.	Y	Y
Hughes	Texas	Y	Y
Jennings	Texas	Y	Y
Scott	Texas	Y	Y
Stacey	Texas	Y	Y
Taylor	Utah	Y	Y
Scott	Vt.	Y	Y
Gant	Va.	Y	Y
Mika	Va.	Y	Y
Wilson	Va.	Y	Y
Amos	Wash.	Y	Y
Bauer	Wash.	Y	Y
Horne	Wash.	Y	Y
Davis	W. Va.	Y	Y
Carlin	Wisc.	Y	Y
*Johnson	Wisc.	—	Y
Lewandowski	Wisc.	Y	O
Schleife	Wisc.	Y	Y
Anderson	Wyo.	Y	Y
Jones	Student	Y	Y
Stanley	Student	Y	Y
Santora	Retired	Y	Y
Westbrook	Retired	Y	Y
Booth	At Large	Y	Y
Browne	At Large	Y	Y
Marrone	At Large	Y	Y
Renshaw	At Large	Y	Y
Treibley	At Large	Y	Y
Chase	Ex. Com.	Y	Y
Foglia	Ex. Com.	Y	Y
Lewis	Ex. Com.	Y	Y
Mack	Ex. Com.	Y	Y
Obermeyer	Ex. Com.	Y	Y
Wilson	Ex. Com.	Y	Y
Bradshaw	Ex. Com.	Y	Y
Geiger	Ex. Com.	Y	Y
Futrell	Ex. Com.	Y	Y

**The following persons were not present when Roll Call Vote #1 was taken but requested their affirmative positions recorded: Constance N. Beachem (Ariz.), Harry A. Gagliardi, Jr. (Conn.), Robert J. Gilchrist and John G. Mesicek (Iowa), Frances M. Cummings (N. C.).

The following persons were not present when Roll Call Vote #2 was taken but requested their affirmative positions recorded: Sid Johnson (Ark.), Michael J. Morris (Colo.), Annabella M. Halas (Pa.).

Introducing NEA DUES-TAB No-Cost Insurance!

NEA Special Services, on behalf of the NEA Members Insurance Trust, is pleased to introduce *DUES-TAB life and accidental death or dismemberment insurance coverage.* This valuable protection starts in September 1985 and is available to all active, educational support and life members who are actively employed in the field of education. NEA DUES-TAB is in addition to any other insurance plans you may already have.

DUES-TAB provides four important member benefits:

- It pays $25,000 for accidental death or dismemberment that occurs while on the job.
- It pays $25,000 for accidental death or dismemberment that occurs while serving as an Association leader.
- Depending on the length of time you have been a continuous member, it could initially pay as much as the equivalent of the past five years' NEA dues for death due to natural causes. Provided your membership is maintained, this basic death benefit will eventually grow to a maximum of $1,000.
- In case of accidental death or dismemberment that occurs while not on the job or serving as an Association leader, it pays five times the basic death benefit. This amount will eventually grow to a maximum of $5,000.

You will receive a special package containing detailed information about NEA DUES-TAB insurance, a summary of benefits and a personalized certification form. All you have to do is fill out and send in your certification form to activate your DUES-TAB coverage. It's that easy.

So don't forget to keep an eye on your mail and send in your DUES-TAB certification form as soon as it arrives. It's a great way to make your investment in membership pay even more!

This is to certify that
J.Q. Member
an eligible member in good standing of the National Education Association, having completed and forwarded the required certification, is presently covered under the DUES-TAB Insurance Program. This coverage, as defined, will be provided at no cost and is in effect as long as eligible NEA membership is retained.
Provided by the
NEA Members Insurance Trust

DUES-TAB...a unique concept in member protection.

NEA DUES TAB

nea MEMBERS INSURANCE TRUST

Administered by NEA Special Services

UNIFIED SPECIAL SERVICES

NEA...Working for you

PERSONALLY SPEAKING

Getting the Most for Your Housing Dollar

A Call to ARMs

The adjustable-rate mortgage (ARM), which sent home buyers into "payment shock"—and some into foreclosure—a few years ago when interest rates climbed, has been made safer.

Competition is now forcing mortgage lenders to offer "safety valves" on ARMs to help protect home buyers. But before you decide on an ARM, the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants advises, be aware of its special features and evaluate your options carefully.

► **How ARMs work.** An ARM guarantees that the lender won't be stuck with a below-market loan if interest rates rise over the life of your mortgage. The interest rate you pay will be adjusted up or down—usually annually—to conform with a financial index of prevailing rates. These adjustments will either raise or lower your monthly payment.

► **What's in it for you?** In return for accepting the risk of not locking in the current interest rate, you get a lower rate of interest at the start—usually about two points lower than for fixed-rate loans.

► **Adjustment intervals.** The longer the interval between adjustments in your ARM, the less you're exposed to short-term quirks in interest rates. Having a longer time between adjustments may lock you into a low rate while prevailing rates rise. But it can also lock you into a high rate if prevailing rates dip. One-year ARMs are most popular, followed by five- and three-year ARMs.

► **Rate and payment caps.** The earliest ARMs had no caps—no limits on how much the interest rate or monthly payment could be adjusted. Negotiate with your lender for both an annual and a lifetime cap on your ARM. An annual rate cap of 2 percent is common, and 5 percent lifetime caps can also be found.

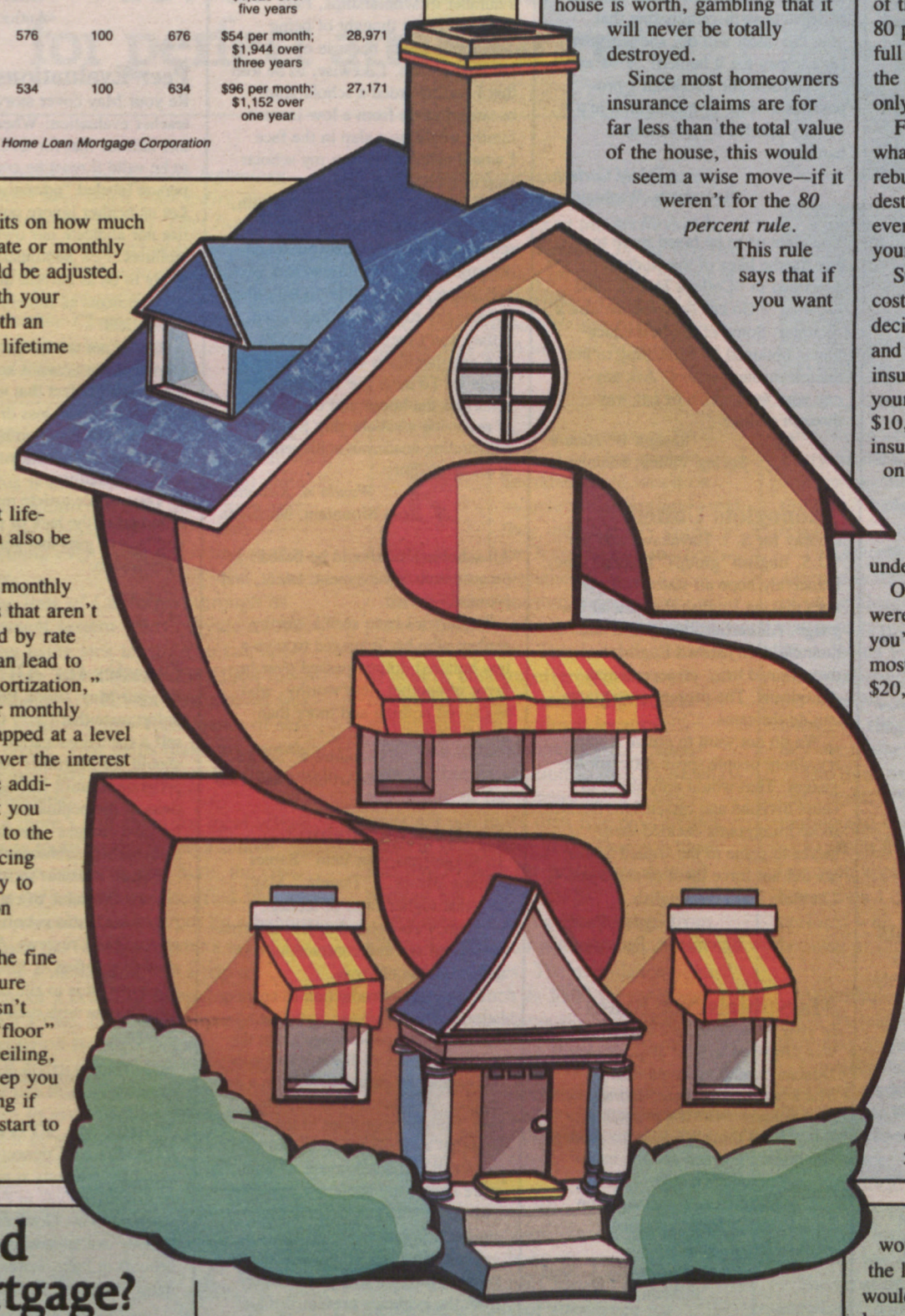
Beware of monthly payment caps that aren't complemented by rate caps. They can lead to "negative amortization," meaning your monthly payment is capped at a level too low to cover the interest increases; the additional interest you owe is added to the principal, forcing you eventually to pay interest on interest!

And read the fine print: make sure your lender isn't setting up a "floor" as well as a ceiling, which will keep you from benefiting if interest rates start to fall.

Borrowers' Approximate Monthly Payments On a $55,000 Mortgage

Mortgages	Principal and Interest	Assumed Taxes and Insurance	Total Monthly Payment	Savings to the Borrower Compared to a Fixed-Rate Mortgages	Annual Qualifying Income
Fixed-Rate at 13.5%	$630	$100	$730	N/A	$31,286
Five-Year ARM at 12.75%	598	100	698	$32 per month; $1,920 over five years	29,914
Three-Year ARM at 12.25%	576	100	676	$54 per month; $1,944 over three years	28,971
One-Year ARM at 11.25%	534	100	634	$96 per month; $1,152 over one year	27,171

Source: Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation



Homeowners Insurance: Scrimping Isn't Smart

Too many homeowners try to save money by scrimping on homeowners insurance—buying less coverage than their house is worth, gambling that it will never be totally destroyed.

Since most homeowners insurance claims are for far less than the total value of the house, this would seem a wise move—if it weren't for the *80 percent rule*. This rule says that if you want to collect the full cost of repairing or replacing your damaged home or property, the amount of insurance you carry at the time of the loss must be for at least 80 percent of the structure's full replacement cost. Otherwise, the insurance company will pay only a portion of the claim.

Full replacement cost means what it would cost you today to rebuild in the event of total destruction. This figure might even *exceed* the market value of your home.

Suppose your house would cost $50,000 to rebuild but you decide to "save on premiums" and buy only $20,000 worth of insurance coverage. If a fire in your kitchen were to cause $10,000 worth of damage, your insurance company would pay only half ($5,000), because your actual coverage was only half of the $40,000 you should have had under the 80 percent rule.

Of course, if your house were completely demolished, you'd be even worse off; the most you could collect would be $20,000.

Since the cost of adding more coverage is relatively low, it makes sense to keep your home insured at its full replacement value. You should periodically reevaluate your coverage to take into account the rising value of your property—and the rising cost of rebuilding it.

For more information, see *Homeowners Insurance: A Consumer's Guide for NEA Members*, available free from your state association or the NEA Special Services Response Center, 51 Monroe Street, Suite 200, Rockville, MD 20850.

Have You Considered A Shorter-Term Mortgage?

Shorter-term mortgages are gaining in popularity among home buyers looking to save money on interest. Some 10 to 20 percent of today's buyers are choosing 15-year mortgages, and some lenders are beginning to offer biweekly mortgages.

Shorter-term financing can save you tens of thousands of dollars in interest, says the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA), because it chips away more quickly at your principal and keeps interest from accumulating.

Consider a 30-year $100,000 mortgage at 12 percent. Your monthly payment is $1,029. However, $1,000 of your first payment goes for interest; only $29 nibbles at the $100,000 principal. The balance between interest and principal gradually shifts, but it's not until the 25th year, after 292 payments, that the majority of your monthly payment—$518—will go toward principal. So you've been paying interest on that almost untouched principal year after year.

A survey of your options can save you money, AICPA suggests:

► **15-year mortgages.** The worst effects of interest accumulation are canceled by 15-year financing. If you can afford the usually higher monthly payments, you'll save in the long run. Total interest payments on the typical 15-year $100,000 mortgage come to $116,301—$154,000 *less* than on the same mortgage stretched over 30 years.

Lower financing rates are also likely. You may be able to get a discount of half a point or so off the prevailing rate for 30-year fixed-rate mortgages.

► **Biweekly mortgages.** An idea imported from Canada, biweekly mortgages commonly are paid off through automatic debiting of the checking account into which the borrower's paycheck is deposited. The 26 'half' payments a year eat into the unpaid principal more quickly than 12 full payments do, resulting in substantial interest savings.

On a conventional $100,000 mortgage, at a 13 percent interest rate, biweekly payments would save you $138,284 over the life of the mortgage—and would allow you to pay off the loan in about 18 years.

Paying off your home in less than 30 years will save you money on overall interest—but there's a tradeoff, AICPA admits: you'll be putting more of your current income into your home. You'll be building equity—but tapping it quickly can be expensive. If you know you'll be needing cash in the future for, say, your child's college education, you might be better off with lower house payments that will free some of your income for more "liquid" investments.

Letters

World Upside Down

Maybe in 2001 our world will look like what you printed on your June cover, but so far it does not. If you hold the paper up to a mirror, you will see Africa and the Mediterranean Sea in their correct positions.

Jerome W. Black
Windham, Maine

The picture of Earth on your June cover is quite beautiful. Unfortunately, the image is reversed. While this was certainly an oversight that can happen to any publication occasionally, it is just the kind of mistake from which politicians can get a great deal of mileage.

On the up side, if you get lots of mail pointing out your error, it will be convincing proof that geography teachers have done their jobs.

Gary Barker
Saginaw, Michigan

Ed. note: Our faces are still red. We discovered the upside-down photo as soon as the issue was mailed—and braced ourselves for reprimands from sharp-eyed readers. Thanks for not disappointing us!

Embarrassing Comments

The Secretary of Education ("Meet William J. Bennett," June) apparently considers anyone outside the Judeo-Christian fold as substandard. In the past, the major political parties kept members with these kinds of bizarre ideas hidden, for fear of the embarrassing comments they might make. To have an Administration openly support these ideas is frightening.

As Secretary of Education, Mr. Bennett deals with institutions that disseminate knowledge to millions of students. It appears he is more interested in promoting certain beliefs.

Public school teachers are giving a service unmatched in history on this scale: turning out children with the ability to make decisions based on fact rather than myths or superstitions. I fear Mr. Bennett and President Reagan have other things in mind.

Are we afraid our children might disagree with us?

Fred Bucheit
Beech Creek, Pennsylvania

Slash College Aid?

I applaud Michele Baehr's intention to obtain the finest education possible for her children ("College Bound...and Worried," June). I am, however, somewhat less than sympathetic to her cry of "foul" regarding President Reagan's proposed $32,500 limit on family income for federal student aid.

Student aid money is tax money, and tax money is my money. I have a larger family than Mrs. Baehr and I support it on half of $32,500. She expects me to help to finance her daughter's education? If her taste in colleges is so discriminating that only the finest will do, she will just have to pay for it herself!

I welcome the President's proposal as a voice of moderation in a country spoiled by government handouts.

Lief Carlsen
Skykomish, Washington

You want us to be taxed more to pay for the likes of the students described in "College Bound...and Worried"? Go cry on someone else's shoulder. Some of the best education is obtained by scratching to put oneself through school. Ask anyone who worked his or her way through college.

Joseph W. Hamre
Spring Valley, Minnesota

'Monoglots United'

Hooray for S. I. Hayakawa and the "U.S. English" group ("Trends," June). I sincerely hope all states will pass laws making English the official language. All earlier immigrants and their children learned English because they wanted to ... be accepted as Americans. The present immigrants can do the same.

We do not want to create a country where people speak different languages. That would only serve to cause division and dissension. Besides, those immigrants decided themselves to come to the United States; we did not force them or ask them. Let them learn the English.

Gaythol Sheibley
New Bloomfield, Pennsylvania

Marsupials Not Bears

In your June "People" section I was surprised to read about Richard Duncan "cuddling koala bears." The koala is not a bear, and teachers should know that. It's a small thing, but I think *NEA Today* readers should be informed and the name of the animal corrected.

Congratulations, otherwise, on an interesting and diversified newspaper.

Dorothy S. Rush
Jackson, New Jersey

No-Need Scholarships?

Your June debate on whether or not colleges should award 'no-need' scholarships angered me.

To receive a scholarship is an *honor* based on academic achievement! It's not just a handout for the financially deprived. As a recipient of a number of scholarships, I am *outraged* at the thought of being denied one solely because of my family's wealth. Likewise, to be told that I was awarded a scholarship because I came from a low-income family would be a slap in the face. I would refuse to accept my scholarship in such a case.

All students, regardless of wealth, have an opportunity to earn a scholarship by being dedicated and determined. Through loans and Pell grants, poor people do have the opportunity to attend college even if they don't receive scholarships.

A scholarship is earned, just as a grade is. To deny the wealthier top achievers the honor and distinction of receiving a scholarship for their outstanding academic achievement is discriminatory.

Wanda A. Kusmitch
Iron Mountain, Michigan

All scholarships should be based on academic achievement, talent, and promise—period.

Too often I have seen a worthy student who has managed to save a few hundred dollars passed over in favor of another, less worthy, who has saved nothing and more than likely did not try.

Theodore V. Sampson
McArthur, California

Faulty Conclusion?

To suggest, as your item "Babies Having Babies" ("Trends," May) did, that higher rates of teenage pregnancy are related to less information about sex and contraception is to fall into an old trap.

During my introduction to correlation analysis in basic statistics, I was told "statistics show" that the crime rate rises in direct relation to the number of churches built in a community. Without further explanation, I might have leapt to the conclusion that a proliferation of churches results in increased crime. It was more likely, my professor explained, that they were both dependent upon a general population increase.

Similarly, your smug conclusion may be true, but it is just as likely from the evidence presented that there may be other factors that bear much more importantly on the teenage pregnancy problem. The concern about an "increase" in pregnancies implies that there must have been fewer in the "good old days"—when sex education was not as widespread as it is now.

Niels T. Michelsen
Antioch, California

Peer Evaluations?

Re your May cover story on teacher evaluation: Whence comes this attitude that for an evaluation to be valid it must be conducted by a person labeled "administrator"? Let us neither ignore our own expertise nor abdicate our own responsibilities. Few administrators are likely to be as current on specialty developments as someone working in the field.

This is not to say that competent administrators cannot have much to offer. But the fact that we have no provision—much less drive—for self-evaluation (evaluation by peers) speaks only of our own timidity and long, sad tradition.

Your whole article makes me ashamed of the lack of perspective and lack of guts that pervade this "profession."

Eugene Miller Wank
APO New York

Classics for All?

Re your May "Book Beat": How unfortunate that Larry Orblom, himself a special education teacher, should see Mortimer Adler's Paideia program as unfit for "special" sections of the population. Does he view his own charges—special education students—as subhuman?

For an educator to so blithely dismiss the value of classics is downright sad. If this is to be the level of your book reviews, *NEA Today* has need to redefine its function—unless, of course, it is to rile readers from time to time with such superficial critiques.

Robert E. Moore
Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin

Public vs. Private

"The 'French Connection'" (May) about the attempts at public funding of private schools in France is a warning to us. Government funding is already available to parochial schools in Italy, Spain, Portugal, West Germany, Canada, Mexico, and all the South American countries.

In Australia, where the constitution has a nonestablishment of religion clause similar to our own, equal public funding of private schools was instituted in 1981. Now half the public funds go to public schools (which enroll 78 percent of the nation's children), while the other half go to private schools (enrolling only 22 percent).

The U.S. Secretary of Education has vowed to press for congressional action to allow tuition tax credits for parents of children in parochial schools. If these are passed, the hole in the wall of separation will grow ever bigger, allowing passage of more and more laws to finally give complete public funding to private and parochial schools. That will spell the destruction of public education as we know it today.

Minerva Massen
San Francisco, California

Deadly Carts

On October 25, 1984, our daughter was killed at her public elementary school when a 25-inch television and a tall, wheeled audiovisual cart toppled onto her. Since her death, we have discovered and confirmed another three deaths and one maiming from toppling TV carts.

These carts are in use in schools throughout the country, and the assignment of children to move them appears to be quite common. I have come to realize there is an unrelenting "happy talk" that pervades the literature in education. One local educator characterized custodial tasks as "warm fuzzies" for children.

It is of little comfort to know my daughter's head was smashed by a warm fuzzy. It is time for a straightforward and hardnosed discussion about school safety. Few educators will have the true professionalism to step forward, due to severe peer pressures. I hope NEA will take a leadership role and set the tone for a truly effective dialogue.

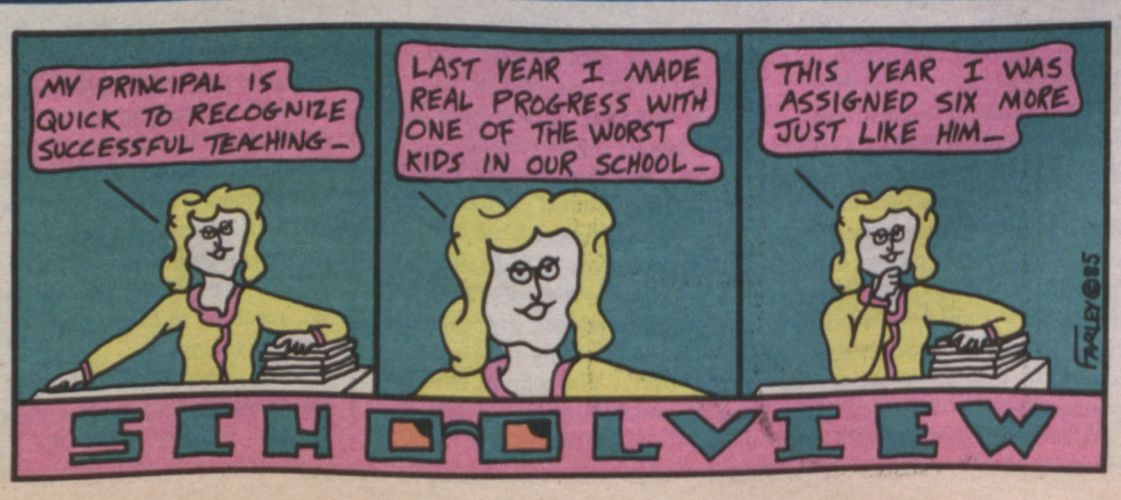
James L. Dieringer
North Canton, Ohio

Unusual Request

Each year the Hacker Valley Parents and Teachers group sponsors a supper that brings people from Maryland, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Virginia, and West Virginia to sample "ramps"—Appalachia's unique onion. Our use of plastic forks and spoons, however, has offended many of our guests.

If you know of a school that may be closing its cafeteria but would like to see its eating tools keep on serving, we'd appreciate having the silverware sent here to Hacker Valley Elementary School, Hacker Valley, WV 26222.

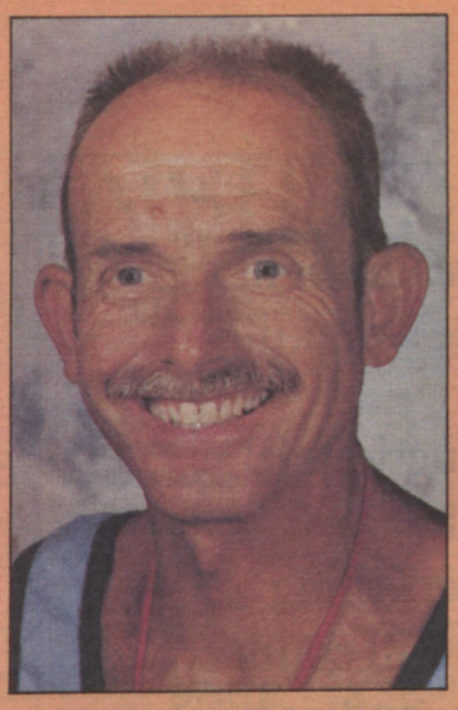
Jerry W. Young
Hacker Valley, West Virginia


MY PRINCIPAL IS QUICK TO RECOGNIZE SUCCESSFUL TEACHING—
LAST YEAR I MADE REAL PROGRESS WITH ONE OF THE WORST KIDS IN OUR SCHOOL—
THIS YEAR I WAS ASSIGNED SIX MORE JUST LIKE HIM—
FRAZEY©85
SCHOOLVIEW

What's *your* opinion? NEA members are cordially invited to use this page to exchange ideas with their colleagues around the nation. We reserve the right to edit letters for length. Address correspondence to "Letters," NEA Today, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

Debate

Should school districts reward teachers for perfect attendance?



YES

Art Freiler is one of those legendary teachers who teach their entire career without missing a day. Last June he retired with 36 years of perfect attendance as a physical education teacher in California. Freiler spent the last 22 of those years at the Clover Middle School in Tracy, where he's been a member of the Tracy Education Association.

NO

Signa Segrest, president of the Houston Teachers Association, teaches eighth grade language arts at the McReynolds Middle School in Houston. In the last two years she's become an adoptive parent of two special-needs children and can attest to the fact that parents sometimes have to take time off from work to stay with sick kids.

School districts should reward or compensate teachers for perfect attendance or unused sick leave. I can think of two good reasons for doing so.

First, it would encourage teachers to use their sick leave only when absolutely necessary. Even though we have for some time been able to accumulate sick leave in California, I'm sure there are still teachers who occasionally use their sick leave just because it's there.

Second, it seems to me that school districts should recognize their employees for their years of service and devotion to duty. Industry and government agencies often do this.

Throughout my teaching career, it's been part of my personal program to be fit so that I wouldn't get sick. For example, unless there was a real downpour, I always rode my bicycle to and from school—both in Tracy and in Dinuba, where I taught my first 14 years.

Also, I've been jogging since I came to California from Pennsylvania to start my teaching career in 1949. At first people thought I was crazy, running around in shorts. But in the 1960s people began to ask me how to get started.

Because I was fit, I never really had to teach sick. Of course, there were days when I didn't feel too good when I woke up. But by the time I got to school I usually felt okay.

It seems to me appropriate for my employer to reward me for the effort I made to be on the job. And it seems appropriate for employers to provide incentives so that other people will make similar efforts.

Instead, these are the rewards I actually got: For my first 14 years of perfect attendance, a certificate from the principal. For the last 22 years of perfect attendance, I did better: I got a certificate of recognition from a teacher committee and I was the subject of a resolution by the board of trustees. The local high school district also gave me a Gold Lifetime Pass to all school activities.

This is the beginning of a local attendance incentive system that's long overdue, and I hope it will grow into something even more rewarding in the future.

The state of California, through its retirement system, does provide a reward for not using sick leave. You can apply sick leave accumulated since 1964 toward retirement. My 221 days of unused sick leave translated into 1.164 years of service credit. That helps make my monthly retirement pay a little better than it would be otherwise.

But there's still room for local school districts to do more. When a school employee retires around here, the custom is for teachers or classified staff to take up a collection and put on a banquet at which the retiree is given a set of luggage or a money tree for a trip to Hawaii or a cruise to Acapulco.

That's fine, but it's an expression of appreciation from colleagues, not from the school district itself. School districts could use the occasion of termination of service to give teachers a reasonable amount of separation pay based on accumulated sick leave. Or they could give teachers who use little or no leave a bonus at the end of each school year.

Rewards to teachers for perfect or near-perfect attendance are based on incorrect assumptions—and they may actually harm the learning environment. I speak from experience.

In 1979 the Houston Independent School District established the so-called Second Mile Plan. This is a complicated system of bonuses offered in a variety of categories, from "outstanding student achievement" to "critical location." There's a specific category for "attendance," but in addition to that, to be eligible in any of the categories, a teacher must not use more than five days of sick leave in one school year. This is a baseline requirement for participation in all parts of the plan.

Bonuses in each category range from $50 to $2,500, and teachers can collect in several categories. The attendance bonus could be as much as $500 for teachers who've had no absences. Since our salary schedule is not exactly in the nation's Top Ten, Houston teachers don't consider these amounts small change.

Still, the assumptions that underlie the attendance bonus are faulty, so the idea can't work as planned.

The first assumption is that teachers abuse their sick leave. That's incorrect. The year before bonuses were established, the Houston Chamber of Commerce did a study of attendance for various occupations. Teachers had the best record of all groups. Moreover, teacher attendance has surpassed 95 percent both before and since bonuses were established.

Also, in 1984-85, the days on which teachers were most frequently absent were Tuesdays and Wednesdays. That doesn't look like a long-weekend pattern to me. Besides, if administrators suspect sick leave abuse, the district has policies for dealing with it.

A second assumption is that teachers can somehow control their absences. Not true. Most absences are for personal illness. In an occupation in which virtually every moment on the job brings exposure to any number of contagious infections, it's ludicrous to believe that teachers will not become ill.

The second most common reason for absence is illness of a child. The majority of our colleagues are female, a substantial percentage of them with young children. When young children become ill, the usual child care arrangements go out the window, and one parent must stay home. In 1985, that parent is still generally the mother.

The third assumption is that "you can't teach if you're not there." It's true that no one can teach my classes as well as I can on most days, but a good substitute with appropriate lesson plans can do better than I can on days when I can't perform with my usual enthusiasm because of factors beyond my control.

Attendance bonuses are supposed to boost morale and raise productivity, but they may actually do the opposite.

Consider the lucky teachers who are able to get attendance bonuses every year. They start to think of them as salary. Then their luck runs out, and they have a long absence. "Salary" is taken from them. As local Association president, I've gotten many phone calls from teachers upset over losing the bonus after years of dedicated teaching.

The most obvious harm resulting from attendance bonuses is that teachers teach sick. Recently, I've seen more teachers in school who should have been home. I've taught sick myself. I know of teachers who've postponed surgery to avoid using leave.

Rewards for attendance are rewards for luck rather than for ability to control the environment. A district with enough money to consider such rewards would be better advised to spend it on salary improvements or on something to improve morale. In all occupations, attendance is high when employees are happy and feel productive. That's a lesson some districts seem determined not to learn.

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